

FINANCIAL TIMES

HTSI

14 FEBRUARY
2026

*Fashion's
new*

Reg

A SPRING
STYLE
SPECIAL





REACH FOR THE CROWN

THE OYSTER PERPETUAL



ROLEX





HARRY WINSTON

RARE JEWELS OF THE WORLD





CELINE
PARIS

LIU WEN BY ANNE COLLIER

PRADA









FENDI

FENDI.COM



A woman with long brown hair is seated, looking towards the camera. She is wearing a blue, long-sleeved dress with horizontal stripes of sequins. Behind her is a large, stylized portrait of a man with blue eyes, characteristic of Andy Warhol's work. The scene is dimly lit, with the woman's dress catching the light.

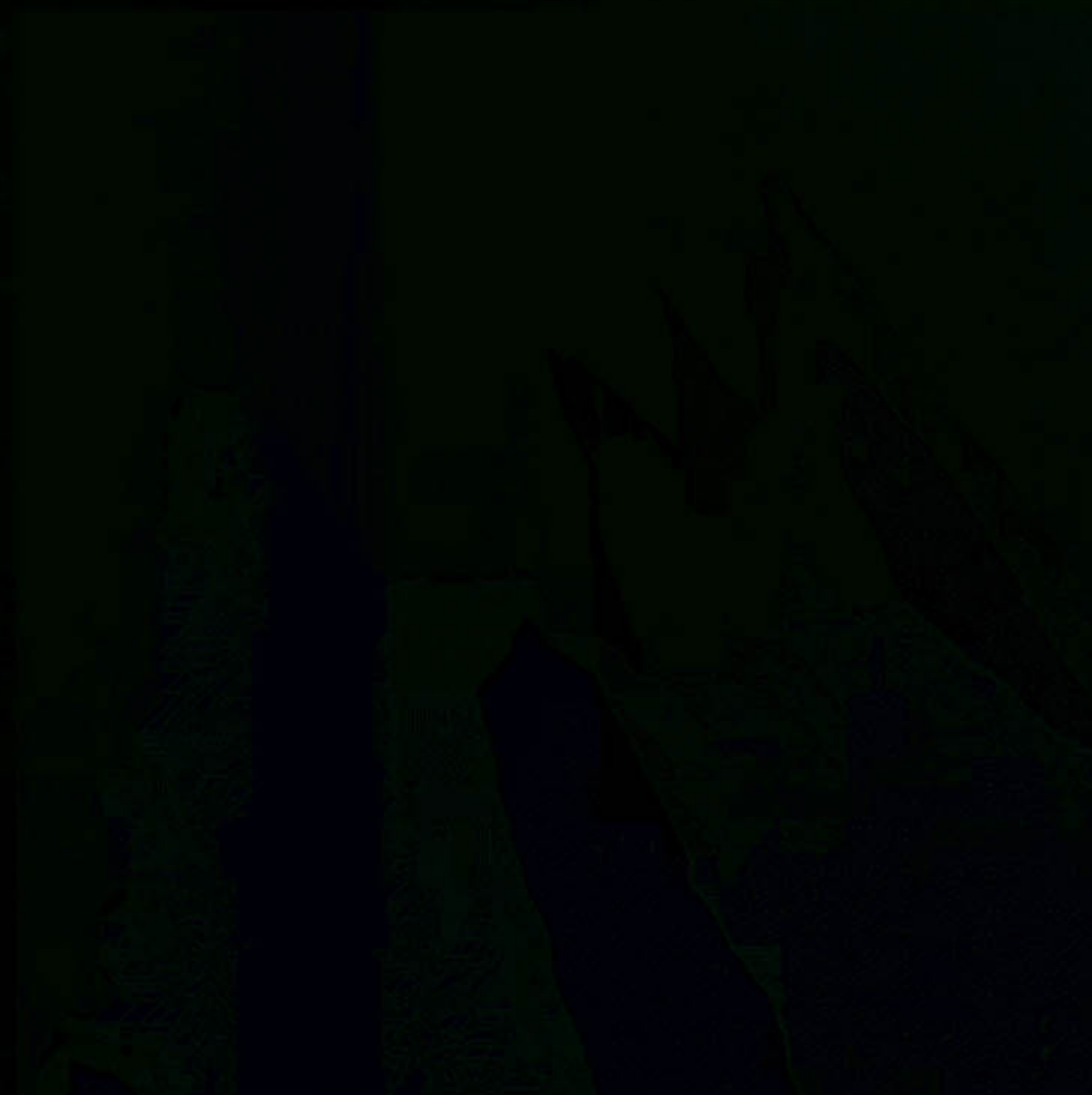
GIORGIO ARMANI

VITTORIA CERETTI



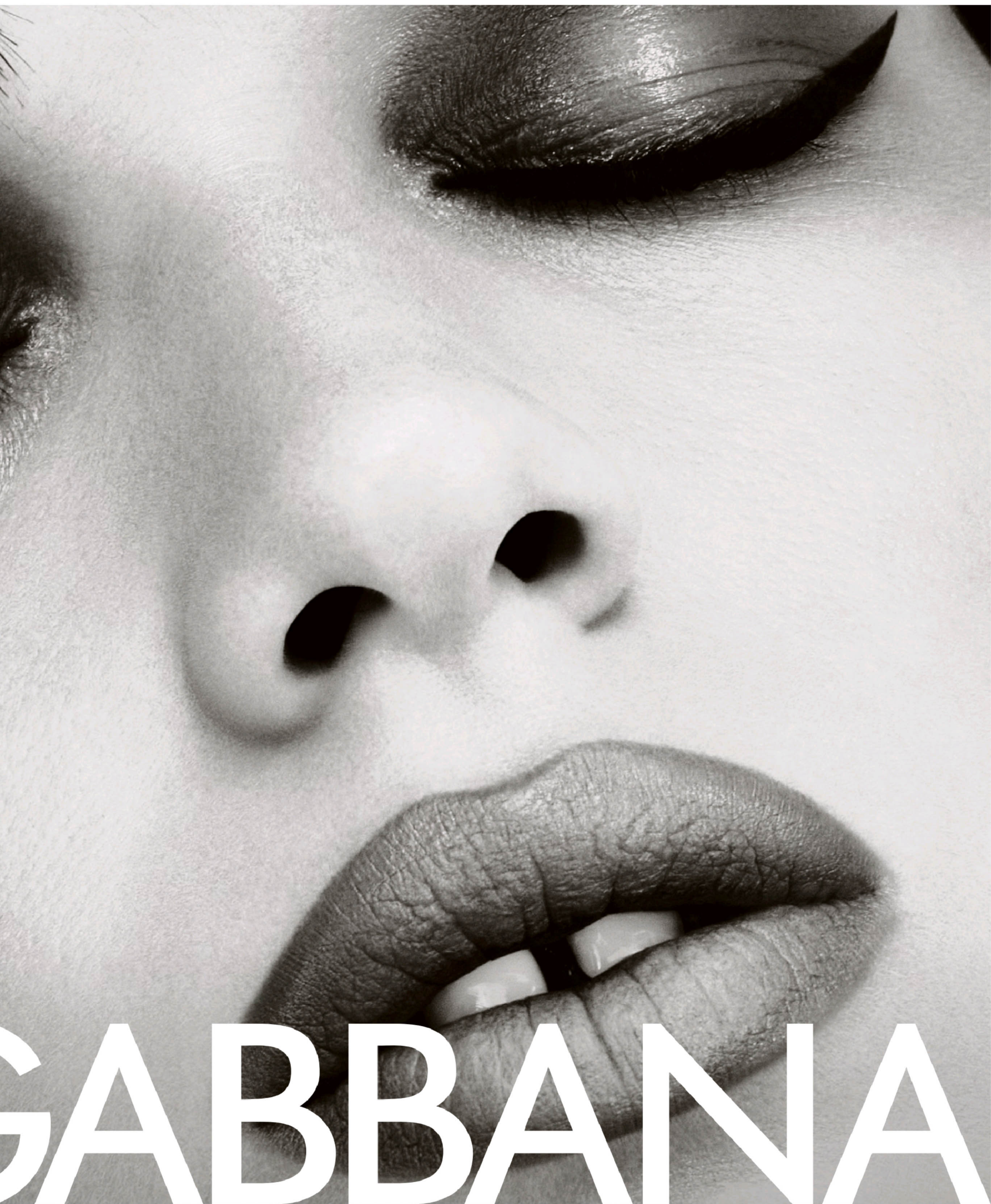
GRAFF

THE MOST FABULOUS JEWELS IN THE WORLD





DOLCE & G



A high-quality fashion advertisement for Bottega Veneta. The image is a close-up, top-down view of a person wearing a black leather jacket. The jacket's lapels and cuffs are visible, showing the smooth texture of the leather. A black leather bag with a prominent woven pattern, characteristic of Bottega Veneta's 'intrecciato' technique, is draped over the person's lap. A black leather strap with a gold-toned buckle is also visible, crossing over the bag. In the lower right corner, a person's hand is shown, with fingers slightly spread, resting on the woven bag. The background is a neutral, light-colored surface. The overall aesthetic is sophisticated and minimalist.

BOTTEGA VENETA



ON THE COVER:
Photography by
INDIGO LEWIN

SARA CABALLERO
wears CHANEL HAUTE
COUTURE SS26 look
44, a silk charmeuse
smocking-embellished
cape, POA

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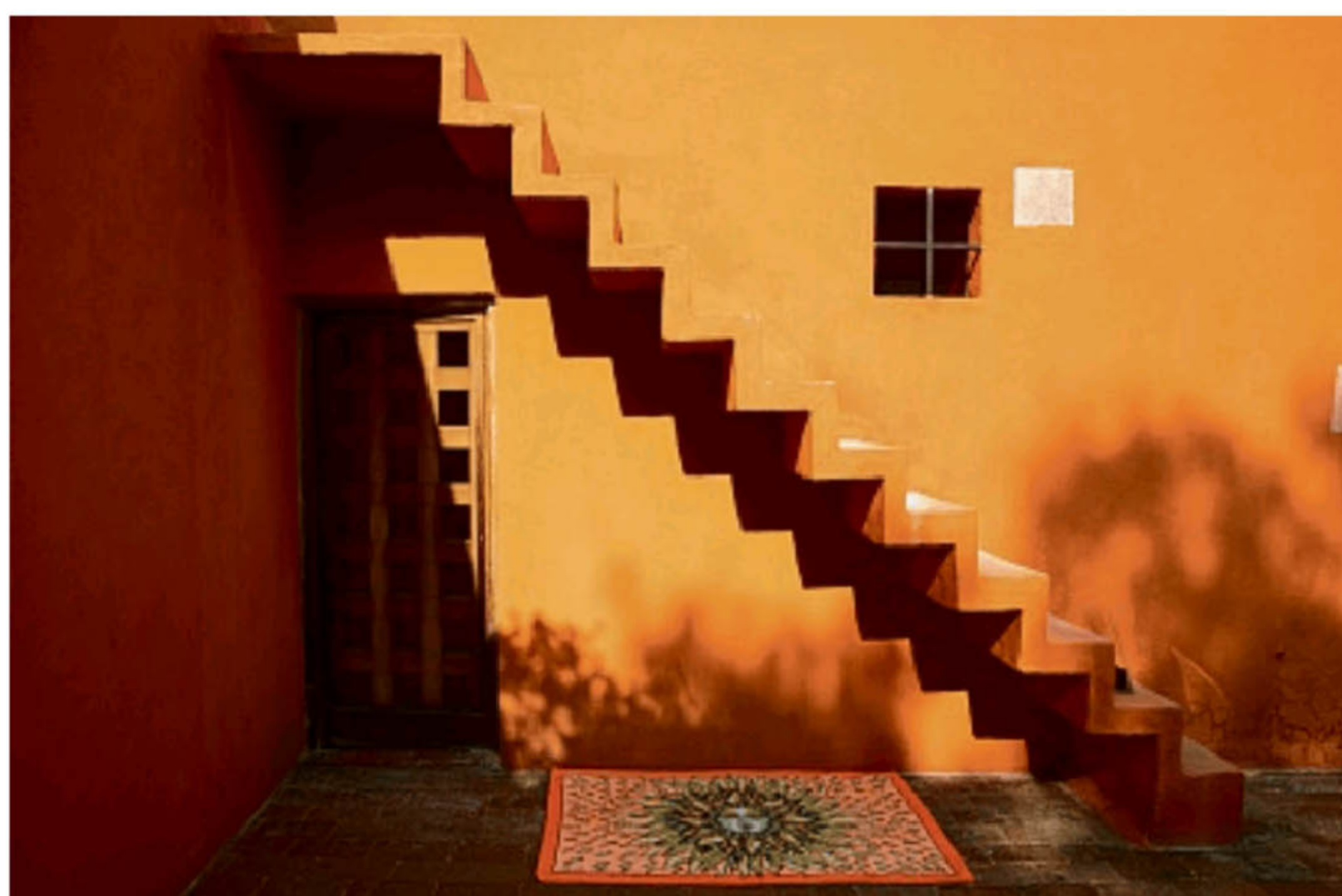
chains and tides

Hermès, crossing horizons



HERMÈS
PARIS

Opening shot



SHEET MUSIC

Tierney Gearon's love of Hermès towels has inspired an ultra-chic travelogue

In 1991, photographer Tierney Gearon was enjoying her annual trip to St Barths when she came across a stack of towels in the island's Hermès boutique. She bought a fish-patterned example. It was the beginning of a collection that, 35 years later, has grown to include more than 300. A few years ago, Gearon, who is known for personal photography of her family life, began a project to honour the different designs, visiting her favourite sites across the world and choosing a towel to fit the atmosphere of each location. It soon became an obsession.

"The most I ever brought was 160 towels to a shoot in Japan," says Gearon. The images, which show the textiles blending in with a wall in Mexico, draped across the veranda of an Arizona house or decorating a vintage car in India, are now brought together in her book *The Collection*. "I wanted to celebrate the artistry and the colour of each towel," she says. "I wanted it to feel like a hidden treasure." **SHEA FERGUSON**
The Collection: A Visual Diary of Towels and Travel by Tierney Gearon is available from thesummerproject.com at \$125

Clockwise from top left: Little Elf Drive, Sedona, Arizona, USA, 2023; Villa Palladio, Jaipur, India, 2023; Eden Rock, Saint-Barthélemy, 2022; Miguel Hidalgo, CDMX Mexico, 2023

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RACHEL GARRAHAN

Garrahan co-curated the *Cartier* exhibition at the V&A Museum in London last year. For this issue, she writes about the art of stacking rings. "I've seen a zillion different rings in my 20 years of covering jewellery, but it was fascinating to step back and think about how what we wear on our hands speaks volumes about us," she says. "I shall never be able to see the forefinger as anything other than stumpy again."



ROSALIND JANA

The London-based arts and fashion writer charts the surprisingly diverse forms of vintage silver pin cushions in this issue. "I had great fun learning about the charms of these pins," she says. "There's a distinctly Lilliputian pleasure in objects designed to sit in the palm of the hand: small, perfectly formed, their minuteness offering a fantasy of total control. I loved that pigs – squat, cheerful, snouts proud – have become the great crowd-pleasers of the genre."



OLIMPIA TALIANI DE MARCHIO

The Italian photographer began shooting on film after discovering her great-grandfather's old Minox camera in a drawer. Following the 2024 release of her debut book, *Flower Island*, she is working on a second monograph centred on her cousin's childhood in Italy. For *HTSI*, she shot a series of miniskirts in a retro-inspired south London home. "What really made the venue special was its super-colourful 1970s wallpaper," she says.



SUN MIZRAHI

While studying fashion design at Shenkar College in Israel, Mizrahi was asked by one of her professors to model pieces from his own brand. The images caught the attention of her first agency, Nir, and she has since become one of the country's most successful models. Living between Tel Aviv and Paris, she has worked with brands such as Dior, Chanel, Hermès and Fendi. For this issue of *HTSI*, she was styled in feathers, fringes and fibreglass.





Chloé

A-K-R-I-S-

EDITOR'S LETTER

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ORIGINATION BY Dexter Premedia

Right: author and Substacker Leandra Medine Cohen in her walk-in wardrobe (page 74)



atching the SS26 shows last year, I felt that fashion had turned a corner. Suddenly there seemed to be more colour, more lightness, more laughter in the air. What was this newfound expression

on the catwalk? It felt fresh, confident and free.

This issue is dedicated to fashion's new joy, perhaps a strange emotion to be exploring at a time when things more globally feel pretty bleak. That the industry should be so blithe and perky might seem anomalous against the background of more complicated world affairs.

For some time, fashion has followed a consumer mood that has been more conservative and quiet. But there are only so many greige sweaters one can accumulate and sometimes, when world events are dour and overwhelming, clothes offer some escape. What better way to face this endless winter, for example, than with a shot of acid yellow or an unexpected pop of red?

We have drawn deeply on Chanel artistic director Matthieu Blazy's assertion that being joyful needn't make one less serious. I interviewed the designer for this issue and am keen to emulate his sense of play (page 56). But what do we mean by fun in fashion? Too often it is interpreted as frivolity. Here we have used it as a mood shift and an excuse to celebrate the simple pleasure of lovely things.

We open with a popping accessories shoot that's an ode to colour. Benjamin Canares and David Abrahams have worked together to find bags and combinations that will immediately update one's look (page 33). Ben worked double time for this issue – he also styled a Technicolor homage to retro chic (page 80). The lurid clashing prints and mini hemlines featured recall the spirit of the '60s, another period of social tumult and bold, expressive style.

A different facet of playfulness is present in Isabelle Kountoure's story with Sonia Szóstak, which showcases lots of feathered, fluffy, pouffy skirts (page 64). The catwalks for spring were notable for scarves and fringes that dripped and



I LOVE THE GINGER ROGERS EXTRAVAGANCE OF THE FEATHERED DRESSES

spilled from hemlines, tailoring and sleeves. Birds are a common motif in fashion and they were drawn on frequently. I love the dressing-up-box extravagance of the Ginger Rogers-esque feathered dresses. Let *Top Hat* be your guide; this season is all about movement, fluidity and dance. For those less comfortable

with actual feathers, I recommend a silk scarf, tied to a bag handle and left to trail à la Celine.

On the subject of dressing-up boxes, I would like to thank those women who invited us to rummage in their wardrobes so we could find out how they keep their clothes (page 74). My own are stashed in every available nook and cranny, and it was with no small degree of envy that I admired these people with their Polaroid-arranged shoes, colour-coordinated sweaters and clean racks of shirts. I'm particularly impressed by Leandra Medine Cohen (founder of the blog *Man Repeller* and now the Substack *The Cereal Aisle*), who does a rigorous edit of her clothes every other month. I'm an extremely guilty member of the "save for later" school of wardrobing. But, on the plus side, I can shop my wardrobe; having so many vintage pieces means my cupboard is the best boutique. ■HTSI

@jellison22

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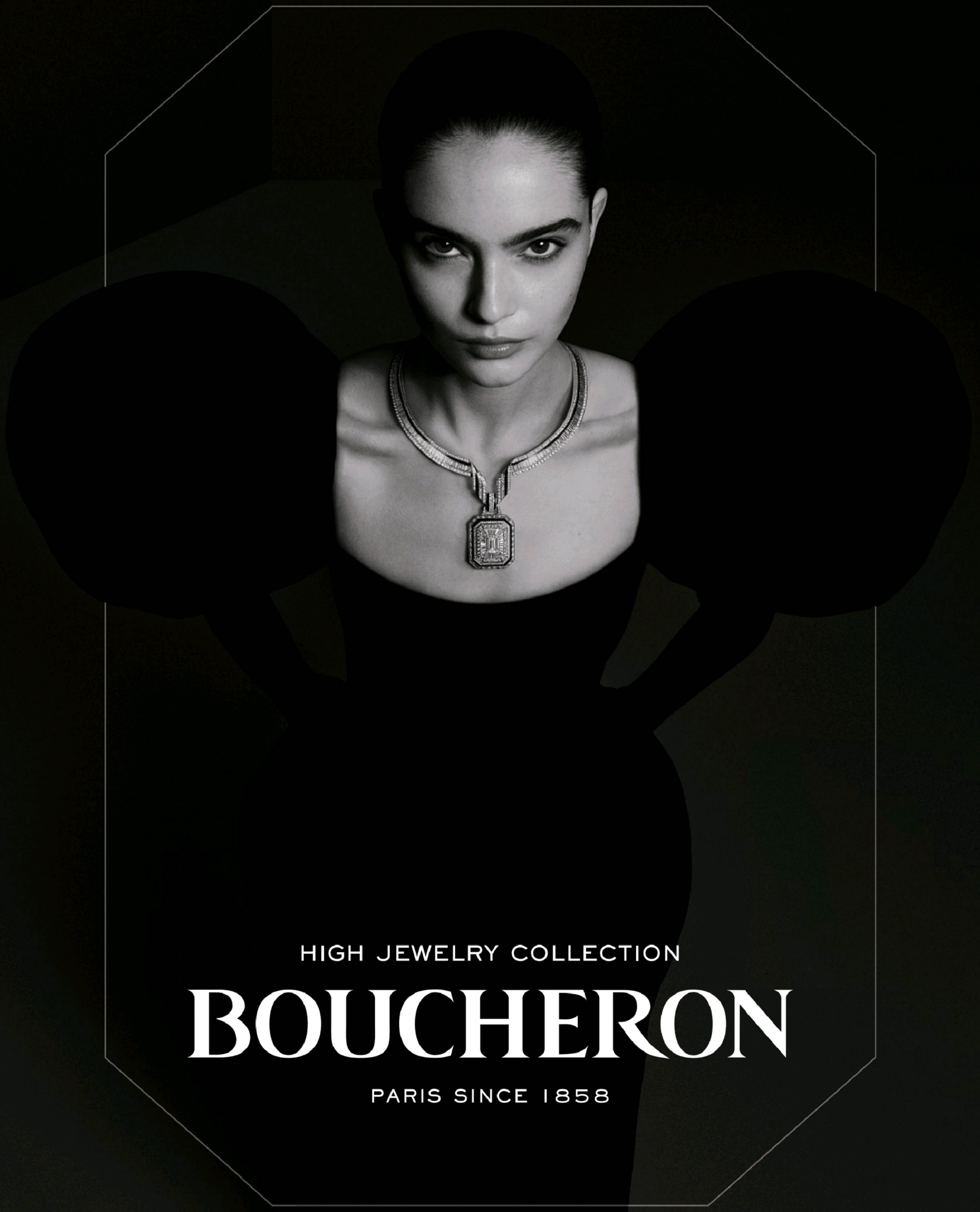
ILARIA ICARDI
GOLD AND
PERIDOT RITA RING,
£10,214 (PAGE 48)







CHANEL



HIGH JEWELRY COLLECTION

BOUCHERON

PARIS SINCE 1858

I WOULDN'T SAY I HAVE A PERSONAL STYLE SIGNIFIER, though I often wear two rings that I love. One is a gold ring I made myself; it's moulded on a piece of aluminium that I crumpled around my finger. The second is a little diamond ring that I found on the street in Paris, not far from the Silencio on rue Montmartre. I also love wearing badges. I have old ones from the Vietnam war, "Peace now", things like that. They are a way to tell people what you stand for.

THE LAST THINGS I BOUGHT AND LOVED were two pieces by Max Coulon, a young sculptor from the Académie des Beaux-Arts in Paris. One is a bird and the other is a sort of half-human, half-animal character with no neck and its arms spread out. Max pours concrete into children's clothing to create the bodies of these small figures. He's very talented. I like to buy pieces by young artists because it's an encouragement for them at the same time as being a gift for me.

THE PLACE THAT MEANS A LOT TO ME is La Baie de la Garoupe in Cap d'Antibes. I went with my father when I was three and a half years old and he took me out on his little boat, put me in the water and said, "I know you can swim" – and I swam. That was also the bay Picasso visited in the '50s. One day I caught him in the stairway, and he told me I was beautiful and gave me a kiss. So I went home singing "Picasso gave me a kiss, *il m'a embrassé, Picasso.*" I was 17. He was the first artist who gave me a kiss. The second was Jean-Michel Basquiat.

JEAN-PAUL BELMONDO
IN *À BOUT DE SOUFFLE*,
1960

THE BEST SOUVENIRS I'VE BROUGHT HOME are little objects – stones, shells, leaves – that I pick up. Every time I go away I find something. Some of my favourites are escargot shells from Brittany that are a very beautiful cream colour, and oysters, which become very white and expressive when they have been rolled in the sea for a long time.

Constance Maure, our very talented jeweller, assembles them and turns them into jewels for Agnès b. The girls in Japan go crazy for them.



THE REASON I CALLED MY BRAND "Agnès b." is that I was divorced from Christian Bourgois, so I said, "OK, just put a 'b dot' – like how they write names in news stories." I thought it was OK like that. And the

Agnès b.

The fashion designer loves baguettes, Basquiat and a shot of vodka before dinner

INTERVIEW BY **SARA SEMIC**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **ALIOCHA BOI**



Above: Agnès b. at home in Louveciennes near Paris. Behind her hangs *The Chosen*, 2018, by Armando Mariño. Left: engravings by Jean-Luc Parant in her studio. Below: her handwritten logo



logo is my handwriting, which has been the same since I was 12. My mother always found it funny to have my writing on the back of her shirts.

THE BEST BOOK I'VE READ IN THE PAST YEAR is *The Châtelet Apprentice* by Jean-François Parot. It's set in 18th-century Paris and it's about a young policeman who has to unravel a murder mystery. I love the 18th century. I was raised in Versailles, in a house about 150m from the Château, and prefer the style of Louis XV buildings and 18th-century art. Women then had beautiful silhouettes with a small bust and a big skirt.

I DON'T DO SPOTIFY but I like music very much and listen to all kinds, from classical and rock to French rap. I recently discovered the musician Chevalier de Saint-Georges because I read a great book about him by Alain Guédé. He was the son of an enslaved mother and a Guadeloupe plantation owner and he was very successful in the court of Versailles. We have our own web radio in our

stores. Yann Le Marec is our music curator and he always finds new things. It's very successful because there is no advertising, only music. Sometimes he samples one or two sentences from my interviews.

MY STYLE ICONS are men such as Marcello Mastroianni or Jean-Paul Belmondo. I like the fact that you can recognise someone by a few pieces of clothing, such as Belmondo's jacket, tie and little *chapeau* in *À Bout de Souffle*, or Brigitte Bardot's beautiful yellow robe in *Le Mépris*. At that time I was going to the cinema a lot and we were demonstrating against the Algerian war. I grew up in a conservative family so discovering [Jean-Luc] Godard was a great way to see the world differently.

THE BEST GIFTS I'VE RECEIVED have been flowers. I love having flowers. My favourites are tuberose. Paul [Lasfargues], my fit model for the men's collections, recently gave me a beautiful bouquet of daisies and baby's breath. He is very inspiring for



Above: the red living room. Left: in the garden with a statue of St Joseph

TCEFP, 2023, BY MAX COULON



me. I did a portrait of him after Titian's *Man with a Glove*, which I saw at the Musée du Louvre when I was about 12. I loved it because his gaze looks away and I was raised with all these portraits in Versailles that looked you in the eye. The photograph I took of Paul is now in the Centre Pompidou-Metz.

I LOVE artists. Whenever I'm in London I see Gilbert & George and have dinner with them. Jay Jopling is a great friend too. I admire them very much. All my friends are artists; I don't have any friends who are bankers.

I HAVE A COLLECTION OF art – around 6,000 pieces – that I've collected for the past 30 years. I have some pieces at home, but most are in a special storage unit, and sometimes I lend them to museums. I have some Polaroids from Warhol, and beautiful pieces by Alexander Calder and Basquiat too. I bought his self-portrait from 1983. He was not known at all at that time. I met him at an exhibition in Paris [at Yvon Lambert]

and we ended up talking for hours in a pizzeria across from the gallery instead of going to a dinner with [Jean-Charles de] Castelbajac. He was very cultured because his father made him learn about the Greeks and Latin. I loved him.

IN MY FRIDGE YOU'LL ALWAYS FIND butter with pieces of Guérande salt inside, fresh milk and Żubrówka, a Polish vodka with a blade of grass inside. I like a little shot before dinner. That's enough for me.

THE BEST WAY TO SPEND €20 is to give it to someone in the street who needs to eat. There are so many people who don't eat enough. I try to do my best to help. I've been raised to share. I think rich people have to share. Not paying people, not paying taxes and paying lawyers to not pay taxes is immoral to me.

I work 65 per cent for the state. Perhaps that's why they gave me a lot of medals.

THE THING I COULDN'T DO WITHOUT is my pen. It's a Tradio Pulaman TRJ50 pen by Pentel in collaboration with Agnès b, so it has a small "b" on it. It's refillable and it's a great pen. I design everything with it. *Pentel Tradio for Agnès b pen, €5*

AN INDULGENCE I WOULD NEVER FORGO is a good baguette with butter in the morning. *Voilà!*

AN OBJECT I WOULD NEVER PART with is an old piece of white chiffon I sleep with at night. It's the only thing I have to take when I travel. I've had it since I was very small; it's full of holes. But I can't sleep without it.

I NEVER SET OUT TO WORK IN FASHION. I hated sewing. My older sister used to sew with my mother but I preferred drawing. I went to the École des Beaux-Arts in

Versailles after school for nine hours a week, and I still love to draw people. I always say I don't do fashion; I do clothes. I was working as a stylist when I opened my first store in 1976, selling workman-style clothes. It was successful very quickly.

At that time, there was Sonia Rykiel and Emmanuelle Khanh, and the press saw something different in my boutique. I always say the press made me. I never advertised. I don't pay attention to fashion. I've never been to Sonia Rykiel. I prefer to people-watch on Place de la République – there's always such a diverse mix of people.



ROBERT PIGUET FRACAS EDP

I'M CURRENTLY PREPARING the *Humanité* exhibition [until 22 March] at La Fab, my gallery on Place Jean-Michel Basquiat. It will feature precious pieces from Warhol and Harmony Korine, and African artists such as Malick Sidibé. I love to hang everything – to put the things together in a way people will understand. It's a big job but I enjoy it very much.

THE BEAUTY STAPLES I'M NEVER WITHOUT are Fracas by Robert Piguet, which I've been wearing for the past 40 years. I love the smell of the tuberose. And I've always taken care of my skin. I can't go to bed without washing my face and putting on cream. I like La Prairie's Caviar Cream. It's expensive but it lasts a long time. You don't have to put on a lot. I don't like heavy creams. I also try to do a facial at the spa in the Waldorf Astoria Versailles every two months. *Robert Piguet Fracas, £185 for 100ml EDP.*

La Prairie Skin Caviar Luxe Cream moisturiser, £500 for 50ml, [harrods.com](https://www.harrods.com)

THE ITEM I WOULD SAVE FROM A FIRE is the *encyclopédie Diderot et d'Alembert*, an enormous, extraordinary book with beautiful engravings inside. It's been in my family since the 18th century and it's a treasure. I would save that before any piece of clothing. And I would have my favourite leather jacket on me anyway.

THE ONE ARTIST WHOSE WORK I WOULD COLLECT IF I COULD is [Jean-Antoine] Watteau. The small, closely spaced buttons on the jacket in his painting *Pierrot*, which is in the Louvre, were partly what inspired my Snap cardigan [Agnès b's signature design with buttons from 1979]. But I'm very happy with all the artists I've discovered – for example, Claire Tabouret, who is making the stained-glass windows for Notre-Dame, and Max Coulon. I like to discover young artists.

I DON'T HAVE A WELLBEING GURU. I don't do yoga. I see all the women going to yoga with their carpet and I've never wanted to go. But I love to swim. I go to the pool in the Trianon Palace in Versailles throughout the year. It's very good for me.

THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE I EVER RECEIVED was to be yourself. Nobody said that to me when I was small. But it's the best. Don't bother [trying to be] others. ■HTSI



THE FAMILY ENCYCLOPEDIA



Above: Agnès b in her blue kitchen. Below: a wicker chair in her garden studio and part of her collection of "little objects"



PICASSO WAS THE FIRST ARTIST WHO GAVE ME A KISS

Above: the library with books and framed artworks. Left: holding a new fragrance by Agnès b



PENTEL TRADIO FOR AGNÈS B PEN



JIMMY CHOO





JACOB COHËN

The Fix

ACCESSORIES

IN THE CANDY BOX

Colourful bags are a sweet riposte to the dark grey skies of winter. By *Ellie Pithers*

PHOTOGRAPHY BY **DAVID ABRAHAMS**

EDIT BY **BENJAMIN CANARES**

SET DESIGN BY **SAMUEL PIDGEN**



FENDI leather
embellished
Peekaboo ISeeU
bag, £7,200



G. COLLINS & SONS



Above: CHLOÉ leather Paddington bag, £2,050. Above right: CHANEL quilted metal 2.55 mini bag, POA. Right: SAINT LAURENT BY ANTHONY VACCARELLO leather and ponyhair Mombasa bag, £3,460





If you subscribe to the American interior decorator Dorothy Draper's assertion that we must fight "the will to be dreary" then, oh boy, have the SS26 collections got some ideas for you. After what feels like years of tastefully colour-drained ensembles and pared-back staples, throwing on a cashmere sweater and barrel-leg jeans has suddenly stopped communicating "my style is assured, and this is my uniform" and started to read a little, well, lazy.

To which the spring collections propose something more joyful: ruffled evening dresses so voluminous even an 18th-century courtier might pause (Saint Laurent); draped and knotted scarf tops that trail in the wind (Celine); and shimmering recycled fibreglass fringed jackets as spiky as sea urchins (Bottega Veneta).

A reset was due, in a season that comprised 15 designer debuts. Emotions were running high. Pieter Mulier, at Alaïa, wanted "clothes that cry". He explained: "I wanted to create something of pure beauty as a base, mixed with the tension that we live in today."

"You can't avoid the tension," agreed Julien Dossena at Rabanne, "but at the same time you really want to have this floating, sunny feeling around." Alessandro Michele at Valentino was more urgent: "It's the time to push more and more, to make people dream, to try to escape, not just from reality, but from the idea that you can

do nothing." Added Louise Trotter, at Bottega Veneta: "I'm in the candy box."

A sugar rush is guaranteed by Fendi's latest take on a hit bag first introduced on the SS09 catwalk, the aptly named Peekaboo that stars in this accessories shoot. A prim top-handle shape in structured lemon-yellow leather, it opens to reveal a bead-embellished interior – fashion's analogue version of an Easter egg. See also Chanel, where wire was added to the classic 2.55 shoulder bag to give it a bashed-up twist, as though it had been fished out of the depths of a fabulous grandmother's closet. Then there's the Lady Dior, reimagined by Jonathan Anderson with a slouchier take on the cannage motif – a favourite of Monsieur Dior's taken from the Napoleon III chairs that seated guests in his earliest salon shows – in a delicious shade of clover green.

LAUREL PANTIN, A FORMER fashion editor who opened the appointment-only Beverly Hills boutique Earl IRL in October, likens the industry shift to "a big shaggy dog shaking all the water out of his fur – it's an awakening to something more pleasurable." She blames the internet for homogenising the "quiet luxury" trend to "suffocating" effect. The current moment "feels like a real leap out of that prescribed 'good taste' and into something a little weirder", she says.

Brigitte Chartrand, Net-A-Porter's chief buying and merchandising officer, agrees that fashion is "turning a corner, with a clear return to colour, personality, playfulness and energy.

There's a strong appetite for pieces that feel expressive, showing that our customers are drawn to items with individuality and they are excited to invest in them." Kate Benson, chief merchant at Harvey Nichols,

is observing a particular desire in customers for statement shoes. "Anything vertiginous, unapologetic and with a sense of playfulness is proving to be extremely popular. Aquazzura pumps are hitting the mark."

If vertiginous heels and eye-popping prints sound too much like hard work, start with a bag. Saint Laurent's leopard-print shoulder style is an instant rejoinder to minimalism, even if the shape feels relatively conventional. The Hermès So Kelly hobo, a cool-girl update on the original 1930s design based on a saddle bag and decades later named after Grace Kelly, makes an easy alternative to black in claret. For however "deeply buried", as Draper also observed, "I believe that every man, woman and child alive has within him a true instinct for colour." Dig deep: there's nothing remotely dreary about Chloé's Paddington in petrol-blue. ■ **HTSI**

Top left: BALENCIAGA suede Le City First bag, €1,990. Top right: DIOR braided Cannage leather Lady bag, POA



ULLA JOHNSON



Above left: LOUIS VUITTON leather and canvas Speedy Bandoulière 25 Monogram Anniversaire bag, £2,050. Above: GUCCI leather Bamboo 1947 medium bag, £4,260. Left: HERMÈS leather So Kelly Hobo bag, £8,800

Set design, Samuel Pidgen at Bryant. Photographer's assistant, Cameron Jack. Stylist's assistant, Roshni Sukhlecha. Set designer's assistant, Sophie-Mai Wiggins. Post-production, Hand of God. Production, MMXX Artists

JENNIFER LAWRENCE



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LONGINES




LONGINES
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ELSA
SCHIAPARELLI
IN VOGUE,
1933

EXHIBITIONS

THE SURREAL DEAL

A new Schiaparelli showcase celebrates the designer's power to shock. Her legacy still surprises to this day. By *Harriet Quick*



This exhibition is a gorgeous collision between a distant past and a very immediate present. We're picking up where Elsa left off," says Schiaparelli's creative director Daniel Roseberry. The 40-year-old Texan designer is contemplating the time-warp impact of the V&A's new show, *Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art*, which opens in London on 28 March. "Elsa was the first one who really questioned whether art and fashion could commingle in a way that felt natural and elevated. She raised fashion to the realm of art."

Seated in his "war room", a fourth-floor studio on Paris's rue de la Paix, Roseberry is deep in preparation for his forthcoming couture and ready-to-wear collections when we meet in December. Since he took the reins in 2019 after 10 years at Thom Browne, Schiaparelli shows have become some of the most anticipated on the Paris Fashion Week calendar thanks to internet-breaking looks (think of Kim Kardashian's "Iron Man" leather breastplate, and neckties that look as if they are made out of human hair). Jill Biden, Lady Gaga and Beyoncé have worn his designs and customers have fallen hard for the Face bag (£6,900), with its printed-resin eyes and three-dimensional gold nose and lips. "I love collaborating with the people who are creating culture: that's what the red carpet is for me," he notes.

While Roseberry is harnessing the attention economy with viral catwalk and



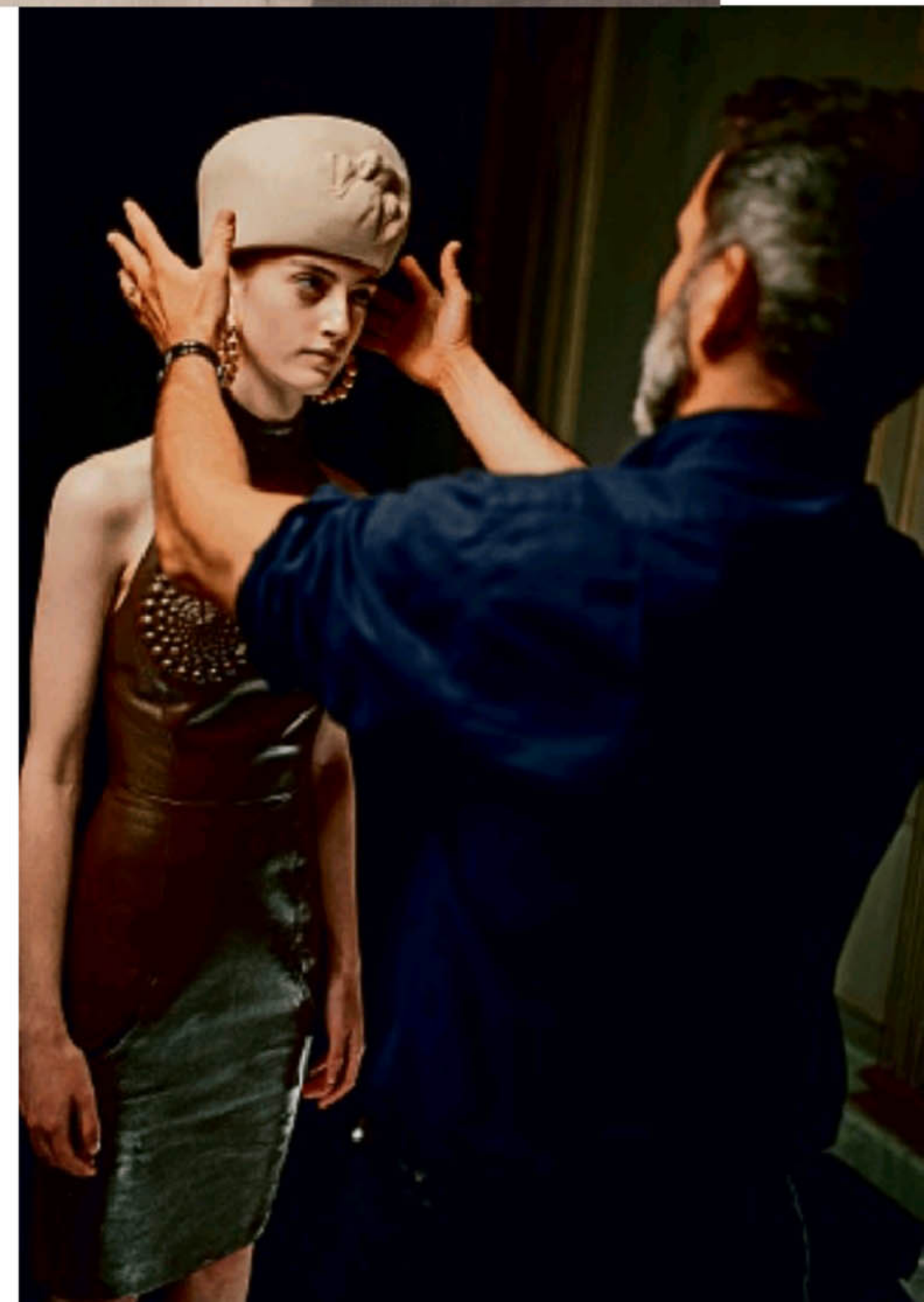
celebrity moments, so Elsa Schiaparelli, who founded her label in Paris in 1927, wielded influence through her collaborations with artists including Salvador Dalí, Leonor Fini, Alberto Giacometti, Jean Cocteau, Pablo Picasso and René Magritte. *Fashion Becomes Art* is the first major retrospective dedicated to the couturier at the V&A, and will seek to position Schiaparelli as an artist as much as a fashion designer.

"ELSA RAISED FASHION TO THE REALM OF ART"

Sonnet Stanfill, the V&A's senior fashion curator, who worked on the show with the brand's heritage and culture team as well as the museum's project curator Lydia Caston and paintings curator Rosalind McKeever. "Schiaparelli was very involved in the surrealist art exhibition in New York during the war and Dalí's 1936 painting *Necrophiliac Springtime* hung in her own collection. She invited artists to collaborate, but they also brought their own initiatives

Above: a look from Schiaparelli SS26 ready-to-wear. Left: Schiaparelli leather Soufflé small bag, £4,700. Right: Daniel Roseberry backstage at SS26 ready-to-wear

HAUTE COUTURE
EARRINGS BY DANIEL
ROSEBERRY FOR
SCHIAPARELLI AT THE V&A





DANIEL ROSEBERRY BRACELET



Top: a SS26 ready-to-wear dress.
Top right: Schiaparelli dresses in *Vogue*, 1936. Below: Bella Hadid wears Roseberry's AW21 brass and rhinestone lung-shaped chest piece



to her. She brought talents in art, interiors, perfume, graphic design, photography into her orbit: she was a cultural omnivore."

THE EXHIBITION BRINGS TOGETHER more than 400 objects, the majority from the V&A's collection. Standouts include 1938's Skeleton dress, a second-skin silk with padded bone embellishment, the 1938 Tears dress, with its *trompe l'oeil* rips, and a 1937-8 hat made to look like an upside-down shoe, all conceived in collaboration with Dalí. There are artworks by Picasso, Cocteau and Man Ray, plus Schiaparelli's work for the stage and cinema, including outfits designed for Zsa Zsa Gabor in John Huston's 1952 film *Moulin Rouge*. Another highlight is the family photos loaned by Schiaparelli's granddaughter, the model and actor Marisa Berenson.

The show also explores Schiaparelli's outsider eye as an Italian immigrant in Paris, her networking prowess as a single mother and her business sense. "From 1934, she had upwards of 400 employees and the maison made thousands of garments a year," says Stanfill. "That's not an easy place to be: women were meant to be in the background." Elsa was known for her rigour. "She opened all her own business post and wrote every cheque herself."

These historic pieces meet Roseberry's work head-on. Among the 24 haute couture outfits of Roseberry's design are a phantasmagorical long gown from his AW21 *Matador* collection, boasting a gilded brass and rhinestone chest piece in the shape of lungs. There are also pieces that sparked social media meltdowns when they were exhibited on the AW24 and AW25 ready-to-wear runways: the life-sized robot baby sculpted from shiny tech waste cradled by model Maggie Maurer, plus a scarlet gown with an unnervingly lifelike rhinestone-encrusted pulsating heart.



It's striking to observe Roseberry's work alongside that of the founder, for while it differs greatly, there is a shared passion (or "pink thread", says Roseberry, in reference to Schiaparelli's *leitmotif* colour – shocking pink). If Roseberry famously did not read the acclaimed Schiaparelli biography prior to his interview for the job, and included only a handful of Elsa references in his pitch to owner Diego Della Valle, he acknowledges an affinity with the founder. "Like an itch that you're dying to scratch: that's what I'm always looking for. Every fitting, every product, every little -ism of ours is this sort of reverence for our heritage and disregard for propriety," he says. "I like that tension and it brings it back to Elsa. That's what she did. She came in like a wrecking ball when everyone was obsessing over chiffon and pin tucks."

And the brand's own archive is growing. For Roseberry and the team, the heritage is a constant inspiration and provides a rich seam of educational material for clients. The showroom and boutique at 21 Place Vendôme (plus the stores, including the shop-in-shops at Harrods and Bergdorf Goodman) display an evolving collection of artefacts – each one a conversation

"WE WANT EACH OBJECT TO SPEAK THE HISTORY"

opener. "In 100 years' time we want each object to speak out the history and make those stories accessible, whether preserved in a digital or physical way," says Francesco Pastore, head of heritage and culture at Schiaparelli. While the collection features few historical Schiap garments, many having been donated to institutions or sold off years ago, it contains all of Roseberry's work and a growing trove of memorabilia.

Has the exhibition inspired Roseberry to venture into the art world himself? "At the beginning, people would ask, 'When's the first art collaboration coming?' Why would we do that? I'm in collaboration with Elsa," says Roseberry. Nevertheless, the V&A exhibition plants a flag in the ground of "what our lane is today", he says. One wonders whether Schiaparelli and Roseberry would get on. "I doubt it. She'd eat me for breakfast," he smiles. ■ **HTSI**
Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art is at the V&A from 28 March to 1 November

ACCESSORIES

IT'S SHOE TIME

Jazz flats are trending. Lace up and swing. By Sara Semic



CELINE lambskin Ballet shoes, £690



LEMAIRE nappa lambskin Souris Derbys, £450



HEREU lambskin Plegada shoes, £470



MAISON MARGIELA sheepskin Tabi Jazz Derbys, £940, ssense.com



AEYDE nappa leather Isla Derbys, £326, farfetch.com



GABRIELA HEARST nappa leather Maya shoes, £800



REPETTO goat and lambskin Zizi Oxfords, £335



SOEUR lambskin Orso Derbys, £280



PROENZA SCHOULER patent-leather Glove flats, £515



**ISABEL
MARANT**



TREND

PRIMARY SCHOOL

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BEAUTY

BITE THE BULLET

Lips should be smudged not slathered, says *Zoe Suen*

In an era of multi-step lip routines punctuated by painstakingly applied liners and glosses, the blurry "just-bitten" red lip trend is a refreshingly imperfect counterpoint. It says sophisticated in a way that communicates other priorities. Korean make-up artists have

popularised blurred lips in Asia by using concentrated stains and liquid formulas in the centre of the pout then diffusing around the mouth. New York-based beauty entrepreneur Violette Serrat creates statement red looks

with her own products: Violette_FR's Bisou Balm is a matte balm-lipstick hybrid that's sold out several times.

For those daunted by a lacquered red lip, a blurred finish can make the look more forgiving. You're aiming to emulate the lips of "a child who's just eaten berries", says make-up artist Ana Takahashi. It's achievable with just one product and your fingertips, but for a professional finish Takahashi recommends using leftover residue from a foundation brush to erase your natural lip pigment. To add definition without harsh lines, buff a cool-toned product such as Mac's Greige liner around the lips before tapping on your lipstick of choice with your finger and diffusing the pigment with a clean brush. ■HTSI

1

2

3

4

VIOLETTE_FR
BISOU
BALM, £30

PHOTOGRAPHS: ALESSANDRO LUCIONI/GORUNWAY.COM (2), FILIPPO FIORI/GORUNWAY.COM, GETTY IMAGES (3), ISIDORE MONTAGI/GORUNWAY.COM, LAUNCHMETRICS.COM (2), VIOLETTE_FR (2), UMBERTO FRATTINI/GORUNWAY.COM, TANNIS VLAMOS (2)

5

6

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8

9

1 CHANEL Les Beiges lip balm in Warm, £37. 2 MERIT Signature Lip Blush in Framboise, £25. 3 FARA HOMIDI Essential Lip compact in Red 1, £83. 4 ILIA Balmy Tint hydrating lip balm in Lady, £28. 5 VICTORIA BECKHAM BEAUTY Bitten Lip Tint in Je t'aime, £37. 6 BENEFIT Benetint lip and cheek stain in Rose, £22.50. 7 REFY lip blush in Wine, £16. 8 MAC Lip Pencil in Greige, £20. 9 VIOLETTE_FR Bisou Balm in Bêtise, £30



MANOLO BLAHNIK





ME + EM



JEWELLERY

FULLY LOADED

There's no such thing as too many rings. *Rachel Garrahan* stacks up



Above: CHANEL gold Coco Crush ring, £3,570. Left: REPOSSI rose-gold, lacquer and diamond ring, £4,140



Top: CELINE rings, from £365. Left, from left: IL ARIA ICARDI gold and diamond Mini Baguette ring, £3,080. Gold, diamond and carnelian Otto ring, £4,230. Gold and carnelian signet ring, £4,490. Gold and tiger's eye signet ring, £4,490. Gold and diamond signet ring, £13,680

Stacking rings on multiple fingers is nothing new. Take a look at any Tudor- or Renaissance-era portrait and you are likely to see gemstones piled across fingers and thumbs, a representation of wealth and social status. All the drama in a portrait of Richard III by an unknown artist centres on the king fiddling with a sovereign ring on his extraordinarily long little finger: some experts see it as evidence of propaganda, an attempt to present him as an unsettled and weak ruler; others as evidence of his humanity. And the stacking trend persists today. Catherine, the Princess of Wales, has been stacking her wedding band and a selection of three eternity rings, both with and without her mother-in-law's legendary sapphire engagement ring.

The catwalks are full of stacked rings, most notably at Celine, where Michael Rider favoured a pile-'em-high approach in his first two runway collections. At Hermès's SS26 show, stacks of leather bracelets were paired with sculptural silver rings. And at Balmain, beachy bags were paired with fistfuls of chunky bands.

For Claire Choisne, creative director at Boucheron, rings should be an expression of the wearer's personality. "The fun of stacking and combining pieces allows each person to create a unique look," she says, pointing to the house's Quatre collection, which offers the freedom to mix styles, textures and colours in different combinations.

Victoria Wirth Reynolds, chief gemologist at Tiffany & Co, agrees that it's all about the mix. She stacks the jeweller's Schlumberger enamel rings in different colours. "They bring such vibrancy and joy when layered," she says. "I encourage balance when stacking, mixing enamel with gold, varying proportions and tones and allowing each piece to speak to the next."

Danish jeweller Sophie Bille Brahe says she always has the entire hand in mind when she designs rings. She wears her signature diamond-studded letter designs, which wind their way around the finger, to spell out her initials across her three middle digits. "Like a knuckle duster, but in a very light and playful way," she says. "They're like waves dancing across the hand."

London-based jeweller Ming Lampson has noticed that clients of all ages are becoming more inclined to experimentation. Her advice is that any jewel adorning the forefinger should be chosen with care: "Our first fingers are generally more muscular, and they tend to be shorter." To avoid a stumpy outcome she recommends a ring that curves over the knuckle towards the hand or a narrow gem-set ring that extends up the finger. Both have a slimming effect; her elongated aquamarine ring set vertically on two thin gold bands is a winner.

But the effect of multiple rings isn't always bombastic.



Left, from top: FOUNDRAE gold and diamond ring stack, £10,560. MING JEWELLERY gold, enamel, garnet, ruby and diamond Domed Stack rings, POA

Jessica McCormack is known for her diamonds, but the New Zealand-born, London-based jeweller's style signature is a little more understated: for the past decade, she has worn a thin gold band on her thumb. It's become the one piece she never takes off. "It's so fine, it's really comfortable, and I think there's something so cool and casual about it." Brand ambassador Zoë Kravitz is partial to a thumb ring too. "She'll wear a band but when she's got a big event she'll go for a ring with a large diamond that takes the thumb ring to a whole new level," adds McCormack.

"THEY BRING VIBRANCY AND JOY WHEN LAYERED"

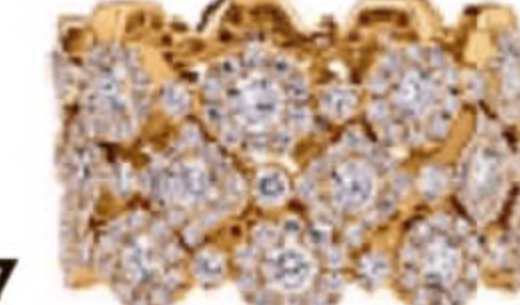
Even a plain band can offer variety. Take the quilted look of Chanel's Coco Crush or the honeycomb of Chaumet's Bee collection. The gold engraving in Piaget's

Décor Palace technique allows for irresistibly tactile, light-reflecting detail even on the narrowest of its spinning Possession bands. "Stacking these is a casual twist that isn't too strong a statement," says Stéphanie Sivrière, Piaget's design director.

Beth Hutchens, founder of FoundRae, agrees. When she dressed up for the recent CFDA Awards in New York, she took off her multi-ring, across-the-hand stack that she wears every day (and sleeps in). Her statement on this occasion was to leave most fingers bare, choosing instead to wear her Strong Heart gold ring on her ring

finger and a red enamel cigar band on her little finger to match her scarlet ensemble. "It worked because for my style, it was so unexpected," she says.

HTSI's contributing editor Nick Foulkes might have to follow suit. He has been wearing a multitude of rings – coining a new collective noun by describing them as "a glory on my hands" – since he was a teenager. He is disturbed, however, to see others adopting the look. Ever the contrarian, he says: "The inner snob in me thinks I must stop now that everyone is doing it." ■ HTSI



1 From top: POMELLATO white- and rose-gold and topaz Nudo Classic ring, £2,450, white- and rose-gold and lemon quartz Nudo Maxi ring, £3,750, and white- and rose-gold and topaz Nudo Maxi ring, £3,750. 2 TIFFANY & CO gold, platinum and diamond Sixteen Stone ring, £14,200. 3 DE BEERS white-gold and diamond Talisman ring, £8,050. 4 DIOR gold and lacquer My Dior Ring, £3,200. 5 CAROLINA BUCCI yellow-, white- and rose-gold ring set, £5,100. 6 PIAGET white-gold and diamond Possession ring, £7,350. 7 From top: DAVID MORRIS gold and diamond Hexagon Triolette ring, £8,800, Square Triolette ring, £7,500, and Oval Triolette ring, £7,800



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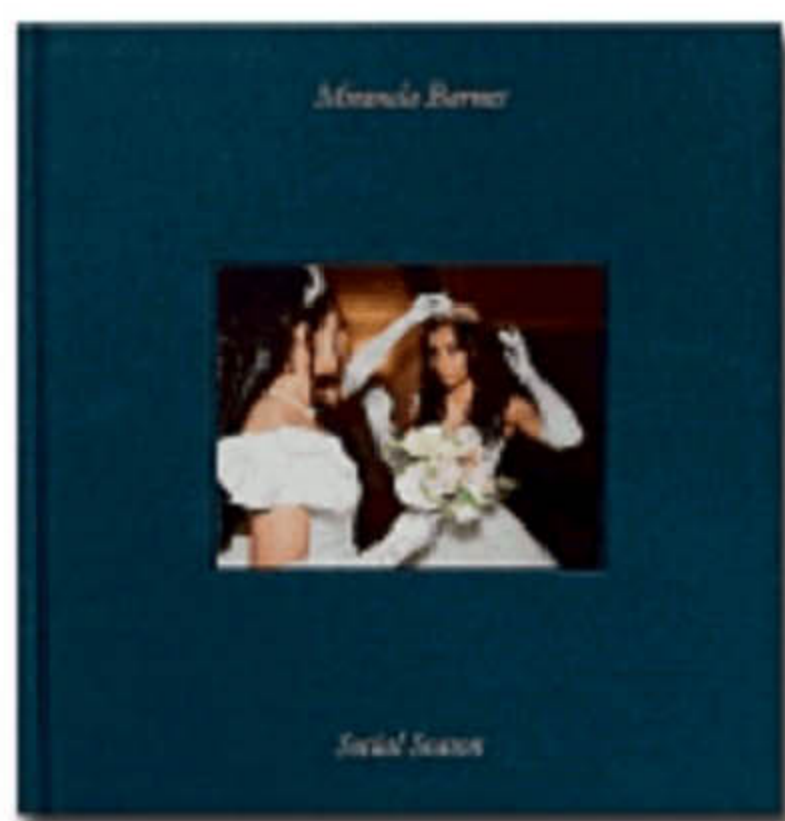
Three smart books for stylish people.

By *Shea Ferguson*



ROGER VIVIER: HERITAGE AND IMAGINATION

"The heel is the most important thing. It's like a nose on a face, it's what gives it character," said Roger Vivier, the Parisian shoe designer who made footwear for Queen Elizabeth II, Jackie Kennedy and Audrey Hepburn. This philosophy is expounded upon in a new book that brings together essays and conversations charting Vivier's life and impact. It features archive designs of bejewelled heels and original signed sketches, curated by Elizabeth Semmelhack of the Bata Shoe Museum in Toronto. *Rizzoli, £75*



SOCIAL SEASON BY MIRANDA BARNES

The cotillion ball was once the preserve of the white European aristocrat – an arena for denizens of high society to dance and scout out suitable partners. In emancipation-era America, however, Black Americans took up the practice as an expression of freedom and social mobility. Brooklyn-based photographer Miranda Barnes's new book was commissioned by director Sofia Coppola to honour the history of the Black cotillion. Barnes captures debutantes in tiaras square dancing with their elders and swanky suitors. *Mack, £50*



THE YVES SAINT LAURENT REVOLUTION: THE STORY OF "LE SMOKING"

This comic book tells the story of the first dinner jacket for women, designed by Yves Saint Laurent 60 years ago. In one scene, set in 1976, Saint Laurent skips around town with his soulmate and muse Betty Catroux as she sports the famous tux: "I could spend my whole life in this suit," she says. "It wraps around me like the arms of the man I love." *Thames & Hudson, £19.99*

Right: the author, photographed with her husband Robert Fox in 1997, wearing a dress by Vivienne Westwood

My mother died in 2004. It was March. She died quickly, a matter of weeks between her being diagnosed with a bad chest cold and it turning out to be heart failure. In many ways it was the least dramatic thing she ever did.

A few weeks before she got sick I had been lunchtime shopping in Prada on Bond Street, perusing with a friend. I had tried on a black dress, sleeveless, calf-length, pleated silk with a pale taupe chiffon strip at the waist. It was beautiful. I didn't need it, but I did want it. Three weeks later I wore it to my mother's funeral. I still call it my funeral dress. A good buy, it turned out.

I first learned of the power of a black dress in the late '70s when I was about 16 and being set up on a date with Bryan Ferry by the late designer Antony Price. Ferry had had his heart broken by Jerry Hall, who had left him for Mick Jagger. I had waist-length blonde hair, and I think Antony was trying to cheer up his Roxy Music friend with something – or rather someone – he might enjoy. I don't really remember much about the date other than being totally tongue-tied, but I do remember Antony zipping me into his famous black spiral-zipped dress in ciré satin (yes, the same one worn by Amanda Lear in *Nova* magazine in 1971). The zip ran from the top of a high collar and circled around the body to the bottom. Essentially, one could be "unwrapped like a gift". We'll park that story there.

I have always loved wearing black. It makes me feel strong and contained. I panic when I think of wearing a pattern, except on rare occasions when a leopard-print shirt might make it into the mix. Over the years black has served me for parties, dinners, the theatre and any work event. And, quite often, a wedding. My cupboards offer a map of my life written in black: Vivienne Westwood, Rifat Ozbek, Galliano, Tom Ford's Gucci and YSL, Prada, McQueen and, of course, Alaïa, Comme des Garçons, Yohji Yamamoto, then, later, The Row. They hang, treasured as much for the memories they hold as for the design geniuses who made them. Each of them black, none of them alike. There is a black dress for everything: sexy, chic, demure, powerful, quirky, minimal, funereal, futuristic and businesslike. I have the gamut covered.

Lately, I have less need for black dresses. Having worked at a fashion magazine for many years, I left my job in 2020 and retreated into a world of tracksuits and trainers. I have never returned to an office and so my wardrobe requirements have changed. Today, I am more sportswear-focused and, considering the insanity of the price of clothes, I prefer to "shop my own wardrobe" than to buy new things.

I CAN HEAR
THE DRESS
GOADING ME.
"SO YOU'RE
DONE, ARE
YOU?"

Even so, the magical impact of discovery has never diminished for me. When, last summer, a friend of mine sent me a picture of a black dress she liked on the shopping website Mytheresa, the endorphins started surging. It was the perfect dress. Made by Maticevski, an Australian brand I had never heard of, it was an asymmetric midi with a draped cape detail across one shoulder and a slit across the other. It was fitted at the waist and flared below the knee. It was not cheap, but nor was it anywhere near as expensive as so many of my once-favoured brands now are. I begged my husband to give it to me as a present. He caved.

The dress arrived and it was perfect. The shoulder slit was very flattering. It was a perfect fit; modern with some structure, and feminine while not feeling too "young". We belonged together. I was ready to take my dress out into

BACK TO BLACK

Fiona Golfar loved her inky wardrobe. But what happened when her world went really dark?



the world. And that is where the problem started. My life has changed. My heart and soul had responded to a beautiful dress but the occasions that call for me to wear it had diminished. The years of joining my husband – a theatre and film producer – at award ceremonies have passed. I no longer find myself packing to go to the Oscars or the Tony Awards. I don't go to fashion parties any more. That life slipped away without my noticing or missing it. It was great. I was lucky. It was fun and filled

with glamour. I went to the ball. And I danced.

But the dress hangs in my cupboard. From behind the closed door I can feel it reminding me that I am no longer the person I thought I was. It mocks the fact that I won't be putting on my smoky black eye and slipping out into the night any time soon. I can hear it goading me from its hanger. "So you're done, are you?" Am I? Is this what "done" looks like? This standoff has been going on some months now.

In November I lost my best friend. It was a sad time. It occurred to me that the dress could be worn for her funeral, but I had to concede that a bare shoulder was perhaps not the best look for delivering a eulogy. Instead I wore a sharply tailored black Alaïa jacket, last worn in 1992, with some wide-legged Yohji trousers. It turned out to be a much more appropriate option.

The dress is right; I am not the person I was. I won't be wearing it any time soon. Life has a way of shape-shifting, and the dress has made me think about that change in a way that more obvious challenges have not. Right now, the dress reminds me of what feels like loss. It's not always bad, just something I need to adjust to. I am not another person. I am doing just fine, I have a life. I have friends and kids, a kind man to love and a very full cupboard of clothes. For now the dress can wait. But we will have our moment. I will go to the ball again. And I will dance. ■HTSI





LOUIS VUITTON



As someone who has written extensively about anti-ageing, I consider myself fairly sanguine about how I look (no Botox, no fillers, just a lot of good face cream). A few months ago, however, I was photographed by a Visia machine, a facial-imaging system that analyses everything from your pores to your pigmentation and tells you how old you look. I had it done once before, 20 years or so ago and, at the time, was annoyed to be told that I looked an underwhelming one year younger than my real age. This time, though, things had got much worse. According to the machine, I now look an unprecedented seven years older than my biological age of 50.

I was surprised at how badly this affected me. I texted friends. I wailed to my husband. I couldn't get the image of me at 80 (yes, they show you that too) out of my head. I wondered, for the first time, whether I should finally get Botox. What I hated most was the sudden, intrusive thought that the belief I've always had – that wrinkles aren't something anyone needs to worry about and that signs of ageing should be celebrated, not concealed – was something that only applied to other people's faces, not mine.

Ageing is complicated. As a population, we have never been older and yet, as a society, we seem more obsessed than ever with looking younger, feeling younger, staying younger.

I LOVE WRINKLES (AS LONG AS THEY'RE NOT MINE)

Nicola Moulton asks how we remain age-positive in an era of the "forever 35" face

Above: a photograph from the series
Closer by Elinor Carucci

Who didn't find themselves googling "deep plane facelift" after Kris Jenner debuted her noticeably "refreshed" appearance at her 70th-birthday party last year? And the pursuit of youth is starting ever younger. The most recent survey from the American Academy of Facial Plastic & Reconstructive Surgery notes that roughly a third of facelifts are now performed on those aged between 33 and 55. So-called "Sephora tweens" use skincare that skews far older than their age bracket, and TikTok abounds with outlandish exercises and gadgets designed to halt the march of time.

A new exhibition, *The Coming of Age*, at London's Wellcome Collection explores our evolving attitudes to ageing. Its curator, Shamita Sharmacharja, has brought together artists and organisations who challenge the idea that our chronological age should define us. Works by artists Paula Rego and Sam Taylor-Johnson sit alongside projects such as *It's on the Cards*, where young people interrogate the inherent ageism in birthday cards and reimagine them as "age positive". "I think it would be a positive thing if we can get to a point where age doesn't feel so linear," says Sharmacharja, "where it's not so much about numbers and more about life stages, or even just a collection of moments in which defining things have happened to you. When you look at the exhibition, there's a feeling that chronological age doesn't mean that much."

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Serum, £140 for 30ml



111SKIN Exosome
Face Lift Shot Serum
and Overnight Mask,
£655 for two x 30ml



SHISEIDO Bio-
Performance Micro-
Click Concentrate,
£195 for 1.4ml



HERMÈS Plein Air
Luminous Matte Skincare
Foundation, £105



SARAH CHAPMAN
Spicule Collagen
Infusion Masks, £76
for four (available
from 9 March)



SUNSOLVE MD
Agate Protect 003
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freakishly frozen faces. In skincare, the emphasis shifted from wrinkle-fighting to something more ageless: the pursuit of radiance and glow.

But things are different now. It's the age of Ozempic, and the attendant loss in facial volume that can result from significant weight loss – and also of AI, where tasks that used to take hours to complete are ready at the touch of a button, changing our relationship with concepts such as wisdom and experience. Bottom line: no one wants to look – or seem – old. This shift away from ageing naturally is something the actor Kate Winslet recently identified as happening more than ever in Hollywood, saying no one's listening to the discourse around real beauty “because they're obsessed with chasing an idea of perfection to get more likes on Instagram”. For Sharmacharja, the renewed obsession with youth is also partly about staying in the conversation. “I think a lot of the extreme focus on anti-ageing that is happening now, like people getting preventative Botox at 20, is about not wanting to become someone who's irrelevant,” she says. “It's about trying to project yourself forward, in a way.”

Many of the high-profile women who embrace a more natural approach to ageing also describe the challenges of staying “age positive”. Jamie Lee Curtis has called for the term anti-ageing “to be struck” – although admits she finds it easier to live in “pro-age” acceptance if she doesn't look in the mirror too often. And the model Paulina Porizkova uses Instagram to talk about her own conflicted attitude. An Estée Lauder “spokesmodel” between 1988 and 1995, she has spoken about her anxiety over “helping to sell a vision of beauty inextricably linked to youth”. Now, Porizkova has returned as global brand ambassador and “a mature, three-dimensional woman with opinions” – but says “this physical ageing stuff demands an inner courage I'm still working on”.

A few weeks ago, the make-up artist and brand founder Ruby Hammer found herself compelled to post a video on Facebook to deny that she had had “tweakments” such as Botox and fillers. “It was ridiculous,” she says. A profile featuring her had run online talking about how she looked so good at 64, but she noticed that in the comments, people were saying there was no way her appearance was “natural” and that she'd clearly had work done. “Which I hadn't!” she says. “I'm not anti-tweakments at all – I've tried lasers and I like Profilla, because it's just hyaluronic acid that occurs naturally in your body anyway. But I don't have Botox – I've done it twice in my whole life, both times in my jawline – and I've never had fillers. No one should really have to justify the choices they make about their appearance, but I felt I had to defend myself.”

There's no denying, though, that her skin does look amazing. Hammer puts it down to having had a really good, consistent skincare routine, every single day, “for nearly 50 years”. Here's what she does: double-cleanses at night (“to remove make-up and SPF, you really have to”), then sometimes uses retinol but always a good moisturiser. (She's currently enjoying a return to the original Crème de La Mer.) In the daytime she does a light cleanse (she likes CeraVe's Hydrating Cleanser, which she used to bring back from work trips to the States before it

became available in the UK), a treatment serum (“pick your biggest concern, whether it's wrinkles or age spots or redness, and find a targeted one for that”) followed by “the best eye cream you can afford” – she likes Sisley, Clé de Peau and Perricone MD – and a day cream (currently Tatcha The Dewy Skin Cream) then an SPF. She also loves facials “with lots of massage. And it's a cliché but my biggest beauty tip would be sleep. When you've slept and your face is rested, you really do look better.”

These sorts of age-old anti-ageing tips – from beauty sleep to moisturising and massage – may be time-honoured for a reason. Nobel laureate Venki Ramakrishnan, a contributor to the anthology accompanying the Wellcome Collection's exhibition, explores the molecular biology of ageing in his 2024 book *Why We Die* (Hodder & Stoughton)

“THIS PHYSICAL AGEING STUFF DEMANDS AN INNER COURAGE I'M WORKING ON”

and concludes that, given what we know now, diet, exercise and sleep are the best interventions for longevity. It's a similar story with skincare. But there will always be new breakthroughs. Currently the beauty world is gripped by spicules – which act like micro-needles inside a skincare product to help

with ingredient penetration and can be found in Sarah Chapman's Spicule Collagen Infusion Mask – and exosomes, another form of advanced delivery system, found in 111Skin's Exosome Face Lift serum and overnight-mask duo, and Dermalogica Phyto Nature E2 lotion (£148 for 100ml).

The trick is to balance the hype with the proven, gold-standard molecules that are trusted by dermatologists. When it comes to these, the non-negotiables are: vitamin A – which has decades' worth of research for both prescription forms such as Tretinoin and the milder over-the-counter formulas including retinol and retinaldehyde

– and vitamin C, which has multiple studies supporting its ability to brighten the skin, soften pigmentation and provide antioxidant protection when used at around 10 to 20 per cent concentration. Other ingredients that dermatologists welcome: ceramides, to reinforce the skin barrier and maintain hydration – try Elizabeth Arden Advanced Ceramide Daily Youth Capsules, £51; alpha hydroxy acids (The Ordinary's 10 per cent Lactic Acid, £8.80, is the beauty insider's go-to) or BHAs such as salicylic acid (try Dr Sam Bunting's Flawless Brightly 10 per cent Azelaic Acid Serum, £50) to exfoliate, improve texture and even out skin tone. They also recommend niacinamide, aka vitamin B3 (try Beauty Pie's Superdrops Brightening Niacinamide, £25), which is excellent for soothing and clarifying oily skin.

But the big one, of course, is sunscreen. Most skincare users know that daily SPF is important, but it is far more crucial to anti-ageing than most of us realise. Conservative estimates suggest that 80 per cent of perceived skin ageing is caused by skin damage from UV rays, with the other 20 per cent or so coming from genetics and lifestyle choices. By far the biggest favour you can do yourself if you want to protect your skin is use a high factor (SPF30 or above), broad-spectrum (meaning it protects against UVA and UVB rays) sunscreen every day.

I'll continue to use my SPF50 daily. And now I've got over my Visia shock, I'm sticking with my skincare routine, and not yet succumbing to injections. I still think wrinkles are beautiful. It just might take me a few more years to come to terms with mine. ■ HTSI
The Coming of Age is at the Wellcome Collection, London NW1, from 26 March to 29 November

...& GREATEST



ESTÉE LAUDER
Advanced Night Repair
Serum, £89 for 50ml



SISLEY SISLEYA
L'Integral Anti-Aging
Cream, £425 for 50ml



AUGUSTINUS BADER
The Elixir serum,
£435 for 30ml



MEDIK8 Crystal Retinal
10, £89 for 30ml



LA ROCHE-POSAY
Anthelios SPF50
sunscreen, £21 for 50ml

The exhibition features examples of the way in which youth and vitality have always been powerful sales tools, such as the 1930s adverts for Kellogg's All-Bran that show two women: one with “the bloom of youth” and the other “wrinkled, grey, careworn, far older than her years” (no prizes for guessing which one eats All-Bran). There's also a powerful selection of self-portraits by the American artist William Utermohlen that encompasses works completed following his Alzheimer's diagnosis, creating a moving documentation of the psychological and physical effects of the disease, and an image of the photographer Elinor Carucci's single grey hair sticking up straight out of her head, taken from her 2019 book *Midlife*, which documents in detail the changes she was witnessing in her body.

Within the beauty world there have long been attempts to move towards a more age-positive attitude. Dove launched its industry-changing Real Beauty campaign in 2004, aiming to break down beauty stereotypes by featuring real, unretouched women instead of models. Botox had become mainstream, and over-zealous early enthusiasts faced a backlash from those appalled by their



The Blazy Effect

Since arriving at Chanel, the French-Belgian designer Matthieu Blazy has reimagined the house icons, released a riot of colour and reintroduced a sense of play. The mood seems to be catching. *Jo Ellison* meets fashion's Fred Astaire

Photography by *Indigo Lewin*



Chanel's artistic director Matthieu Blazy at the Grand Palais in Paris

Opposite, from top: catwalk looks 33, 12 and 49 from Chanel Haute Couture SS26



Left: a detail of look 34, a silk mousseline smocking-embellished dress, at the Chanel atelier in Paris

Right, from left: backstage at the Grand Palais, Adeng Marial wears look 20, a tweed-effect feather-embroidered coat with braid trims and metal earrings. Stephanie Cavalli wears look 1, a silk mousseline suit with pearl braid trim embroidery, silk mousseline bag with braid trims and metal earrings. Sara Caballero wears look 44, a silk charmeuse smocking-embellished cape. Throughout, all pieces CHANEL HAUTE COUTURE SS26, POA





anything has characterised Matthieu Blazy's tenure at Chanel so far, it must surely be a smile. Specifically that belonging to the model Awar Odhiang, who closed the designer's debut show. Walking through a Grand Palais all spun with multicoloured planets, Odhiang unleashed a mega-grin. It was accessorised with a white silk T-shirt and a "piña colada" skirt. Bouncing down the catwalk with her own cosmic energy, she inaugurated a total shift in mood.

It was what they call in the industry a "moment", and the climax of a season in which more than a dozen designers had made debuts. Anticipation about Blazy's vision had reached a crescendo well before the unveiling of his interstellar show. He did it again in December, with a Métiers d'art presentation in New York in an abandoned subway station. The collection – surprising, chic and featuring a Superman sweater – combined expertise and wit.

The 41-year-old Belgian-French designer was not initially rumoured to be a frontrunner to lead the house founded, in Paris, by Gabrielle "Coco" Chanel in 1910. But according to Bruno Pavlovsky, president of Chanel haute couture and fashion, there was never any contest: "From day one, the way he talked about Chanel, about Gabrielle Chanel, and about what Chanel could represent left us in no doubt." Blazy's role as artistic director of fashion doesn't include beauty, jewellery or watches, but as the most public-facing figure of the house, his influence is vast. Chanel is a behemoth, still held in private ownership by the Wertheimer brothers, and a sprawling empire whose revenues were \$18.7bn in 2024. For many decades, the creative leadership was steered by the late designer Karl Lagerfeld. Blazy has been tasked with writing a new creative chapter and freshening up the "assortment", as Pavlovsky describes it, in a deeply respectful way.

Last month, Blazy debuted his first haute couture show – a rose-tinted confection of mousseline and mushrooms filled with romance, Nelly Furtado music and cartoon birds. "Matthieu's work is beautiful and his designs are exquisite," says Nicole Kidman, who first started working

with Chanel in 2004 as the face of its fragrance No 5. "From the fabrics to the silhouettes, it is divine." "Light, free, comfortable, active, simple, anchored and delighted," echoes Tilda Swinton, who was almost translucent in a gold spun bouclé skirt suit with raw raffia hem at the show. "There is wit and energy in these clothes and their spirit is catching..." Could it be that, after seasons of austere, cerebral quiet luxury, fashion has rediscovered joy?

Days before that haute couture debut, I meet Blazy in his studio. Calm, quietly handsome, a little tired-looking, he wears the male designer uniform of jeans and sneakers with a navy sweater of his own design. The sweater opened his Métiers d'art offering, a surprisingly basic garment that one might not expect to find at Chanel. "I love it," he says while pulling at the side seams. "I wear it every day."

If he's responsible for the new surge in fashion serotonin, he's too modest to take the credit. Though he is happy to have introduced some levity into a world that feels quite bleak. "It started when I watched a documentary about Fred Astaire," he says. "I thought it was amazing to see someone that was so joyful – someone that could really entertain – but at the same time be so good. Often something modern becomes cerebral, but I think you can say something funny and be very serious."

Certain words – funny, playful, cute – are used cautiously in fashion. Especially when discussing matters of contemporary style. Blazy uses all of them with a refreshingly anti-intellectual confidence. "I like the idea of cute," he says while showing off a bedazzled earring that finds a tweetie bird suspended on a bar (a nod, perhaps, to that famous Coco perfume ad of 1991 by Jean-Paul Goude).

"I THINK YOU CAN SAY SOMETHING FUNNY AND BE VERY SERIOUS"

"It became almost a vulgar term in fashion. But I like cute. I love playful. Pretty is fine, too. Nostalgia is also beautiful. I am insanely nostalgic, you know?"

Blazy was born in Paris in 1984. His father is an expert in pre-Colombian art and his mother an anthropologist; he has an older brother and a twin sister. The family travelled widely, and the Blazy children were encouraged to engage with art. "It wasn't didactic, we would have a choice," he recalls of family outings. "When we went to the museum, we were free to roam."

He studied at the prestigious La Cambre in Brussels and worked at Maison Margiela, Celine (under Phoebe Philo) and with Raf Simons at Calvin Klein. He was made creative director of Bottega Veneta in 2021, where he gained a reputation for exceptional

craftsmanship and an affection for *trompe l'oeil*. Blazy often presents things that seem quotidian but are elevated, provoking a double take – a flannel shirt made of nappa leather or a silken denim. "I'm Belgian," he says. "This is not a pipe' – you know, this kind of Magritte thing. I think it engages people and I like the idea of the second look."

Today, the studio is set up for couture fittings. Some half-dozen outfits are displayed on mannequins, with the shelves spilling with jewellery, scraps of sorbet-coloured lingerie and racks and racks of shoes. Unlike most collections, this one has been created without any sketching. "We're fitting the clothes on the bodies of the women that are going to wear them," says the designer, for whom this is a first-ever couture showing. "It's an extraordinary process, but the magic only happens at the end."

The most exclusive expression of Chanel's commercial output, haute couture serves only a few hundred clients. It showcases the skills of the atelier, alongside the 60 Maisons d'art and manufacturers – including Lesage and Atelier Montex (embroiderers), Lemarié (the feather and flower specialists) and Massaro (the shoemakers) – whose specialist skills the house is committed to preserve. It may seem niche but its cultural value is enormous, the creative apex of the brand.

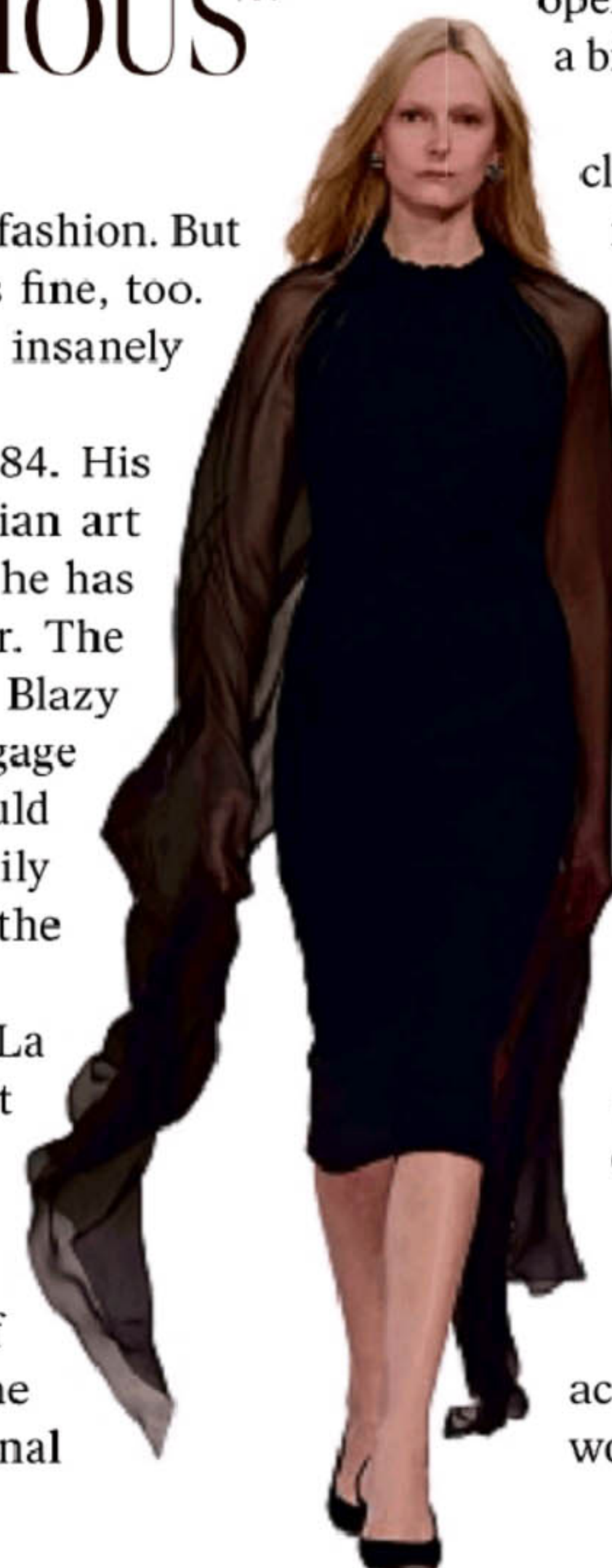
Blazy must walk a tightrope, respecting the heritage codes on which the house has built its fortune while infusing it with something new. "The first time I went to the archive, I got overwhelmed," he says. "There was so much great stuff that I felt paralysed. And then I stepped back and started to read the books that talked about aspects of [Gabrielle's] personality that were never part of the myth that Chanel promotes. For example, I read that Chanel loved animal print..." It gave him the confidence to try new things. He's also playing with the slim Chanel proportions to make them looser, and embracing a spectrum of colour outside the traditional black, white and beige.

"I don't need to reinvent that slingback, or the iconic 2.55 bag," says the designer of how far to push. "But maybe we can look at it from a different angle. To be modern you don't have to be disruptive or crazy. It can be a small gesture – you just have to give a little twist." Such as slashing the fabled Chanel jacket across the mid-line as he did for his opening look at the ready-to-wear show? That seemed like a big gesture. Blazy grins: "But it was a simple idea."

"Listen," he continues, "it's very easy to make clothes that scream wow! It's a quick and easy win. I'm interested in clothes that do not scream, but that are –" he drops his voice as though Coco might be listening – "just really fucking well-made."

The couture show held at the Grand Palais began with the vision of a "bird on a mushroom", something Blazy saw while on a trip to the Pyrenees. It spoke to his notion of Chanel women as a global flock. "Birds are free, they have a different point of view. And I thought it was a beautiful metaphor to talk about Chanel women, in general. I wanted to do something that was very universal and could be understood by anyone."

He was also preoccupied by lightness. "I challenged the atelier, 'Can we do Chanel in mousseline?'" Mousseline (or muslin) was not considered a sophisticated fabric until Chanel herself elevated it in the '20s. Blazy wanted to push it further. "Can we do all the Chanel? Can we do the suits?" His first look was a classic Chanel skirt suit reinterpreted as a skein of dusty pink. Embellished with pearls and accessorised with a muslin 2.55 bag hung with a strap woven in gold thread. In the bag were muslin envelopes





Above: mannequins in the Chanel atelier. Right: look 3 from Chanel Haute Couture SS26. Far right: a pink pleated cape. Below: feathers adorn a tweed skirt. Below left: Chanel Haute Couture SS26 look 26



Left: weaving on a loom in the Chanel atelier. Right: look 48 from Chanel Haute Couture SS26



Above: a craftsman with a two-tone tweed skirt in the Chanel atelier. Below: fungi-heeled slingbacks and two-tone pumps backstage at the Grand Palais

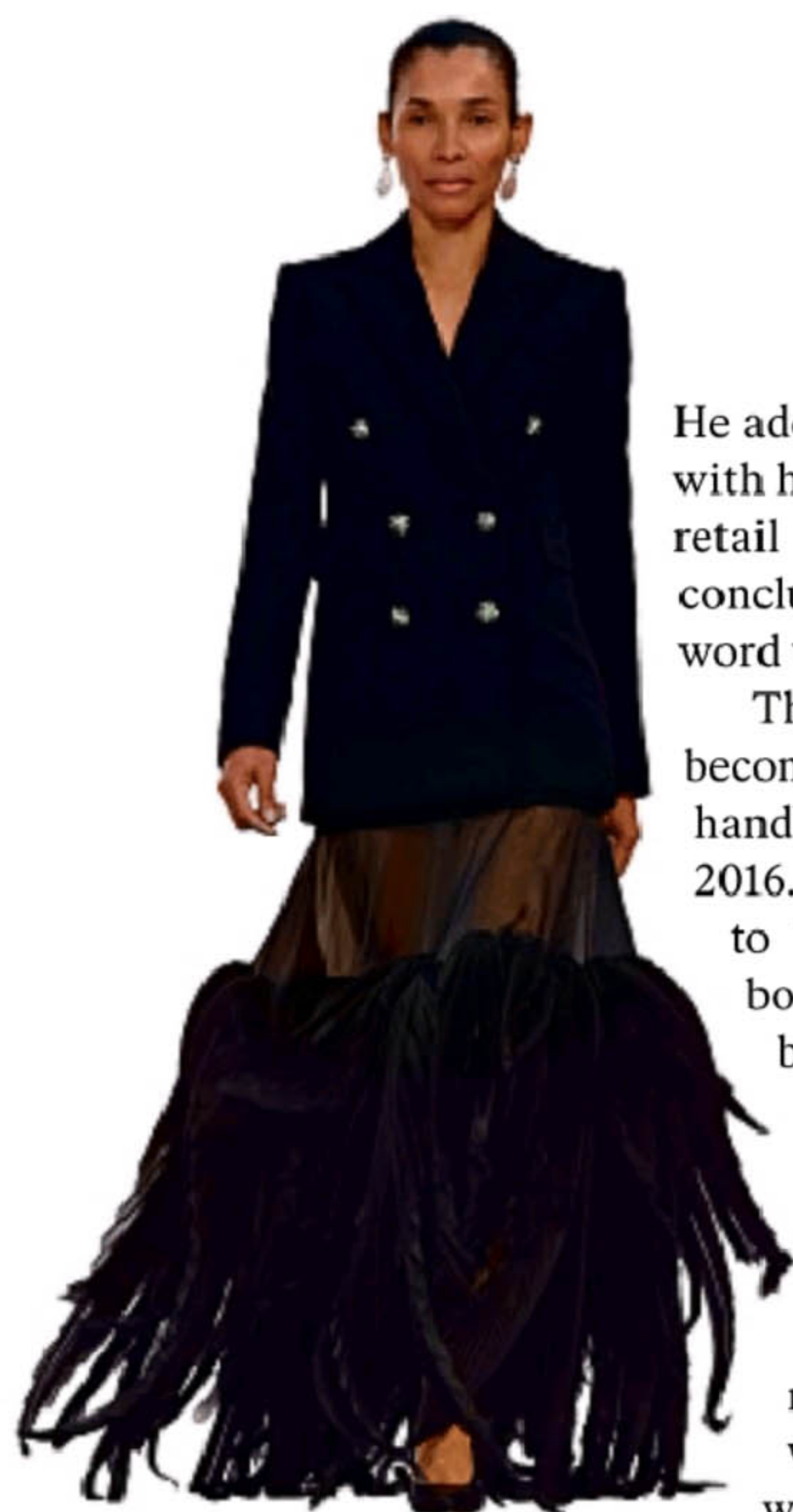




Adeng wears look 20, a
tweed-effect feather-
embroidered coat
with braid trims and
metal earrings

Opposite, from top: looks
31, 54 and 9 from Chanel
Haute Couture SS26

Photographer's assistant:
Barney Couch.
Production: Parent



He adds: “We recently had a retail summit, with half of our top boutique managers and retail teams. I was asked one word to conclude our conference, and I said the word was ‘confident.’”

There has been criticism of Chanel becoming too expensive. The price of handbags has more than doubled since 2016. “We are working hard with Matthieu to build the right assortment for the boutique,” says Pavlovsky. “It’s not about being expensive or cheap, it is about finding the right price for the right garment. Chanel is not cheap, it will never be. But we don’t always have to be super-expensive.”

The Blazy bounce is building. His red-carpet outfits have been wildly visible: according to Launchmetrics, which measures brand performance,

his dress for Selena Gomez at the Golden Globes earned a media impact value of \$7.2mn for both the actor and the brand, outperforming all other appearances at the event. Michelle Obama wore a Chanel suit jacket and puffball earrings to promote her book *The Look*. A\$AP Rocky, one of the house’s more recent brand ambassadors, makes a good case for the existence (maybe, one day) of Chanel menswear.

containing muslin letters, each embroidered with personal messages, contributed by the women walking in the show. The idea was nostalgic, romantic and demonstrative of a killer commercial instinct – the haute couture patrons are encouraged to choose from a “repertoire of symbols” so that they may embroider their own stories into the looks. It reduced the house icons to their most essential ingredients while acknowledging them as “spirits” that both hold up and haunt the house.

There were more daring gestures also. In the studio, Blazy points to a jacket and skirt made up of tiny ovoid panels, like a bird’s plumage, in a tapestry of pale arsenic yellow and grey. “I love this,” he says. “All the pieces are hand-dyed and then hand-cut. The point is for it to look like an incredible pigeon. I also like the colour. It’s a bit sick. In a good way.”

“Sick pigeon” is perhaps not a sales pitch Chanel is used to. But the piece encapsulates Blazy’s appetite for pushing the parameters of taste. “You can play it very safe, by the code, it reads Chanel, it’s very clear. Or you can allow yourself to go further, and sometimes fail and then reflect,” he says. “Without risk, it would not be a very creative process, it would be a recipe. I like a challenge. I’d rather try the idea and explore, and if it doesn’t work, at least we try.”



after a period felt throughout the industry of sluggish sales. But Pavlovsky says that things improved in the second half of 2025 following the previous year’s ups and downs.

“I don’t like to say things are returning to normal,” says Pavlovsky, “because we are not in a normal world. The reality is that it’s unpredictable, so you have to adapt yourself. But we have seen many clients back in the boutique because of the economic situation. We are seeing clients back in the States, and back in China, too.”

Despite the fanfare that has accompanied his initial outings, it’s hard to quantify the Blazy effect. His first collection will only arrive in stores next month. Chanel revenues were down 4.3 per cent in 2024

“SICK PIGEON” IS PERHAPS NOT A SALES PITCH CHANEL IS USED TO

“In the past four months, Chanel has had a 47 per cent growth in search rate on ReSee,” says stylist and co-founder of vintage platform ReSee, Sabrina Marshall, “which is astronomical in the resale market. Matthieu Blazy has revived a fresh desire for Chanel.” Tami Kern, founder of Kern1, an online store dedicated to reselling rare pre-owned Chanel jackets, has also observed a spike. “It’s not simply that Chanel clients are suddenly buying more, it’s more specific. I’m seeing both new clients, who follow Matthieu Blazy and what he stands for, and existing Chanel clients asking for pieces that echo his styling cues.”

For example: “He introduced grey as a new Chanel shade, as though he blended the house’s black-and-white codes; clients responded immediately. I saw the same effect with the Métiers d’art show [staged in December]. Clients asked whether I had vintage Chanel with animal motifs. The red jackets I’d had sitting in stock for a while suddenly flew off the shelf. Lastly, I’m seeing more interest in buying the full look. Blazy has made the suit feel relevant again.”



Blazy’s day starts with the team at 9.30am. “Before that, there is time to do my own things for work with the press, or do research, but then it’s clothes, shoes, bags,” he says. “From 9.30am to 7.30pm I work on product. And then at 7.30pm, I have my last meeting, and then I have time to do my own thing.”

What does he do when he’s not working? “I go to the south of Italy, where my partner [an artist whom he prefers not to name] is based. I didn’t go a lot in the first year at Chanel, trust me, but yeah, when I’m not working I like to get out of town. Or I go to galleries, museums, I walk in the park. I love to watch my partner gardening. But I also love to go out and dance. I work hard, but when I don’t work, I go back to places that ground me. You know, like seeing my brother’s kids.”

If he’s nervous about the weight of expectation he hides it well. But “I feel the pressure,” he admits. “When I’m not at work, at night, the pressure is immense.”

Pavlovsky is adamant that he must give Blazy sufficient creative “oxygen”. Blazy is overseeing 10 collections a year, and Pavlovsky wants “to give him space”. Chanel seems unusually nurturing, especially at a time when designer careers are more precarious than at any time in history.

“I’ve worked at many, many houses, but there is a culture here that I have found really incredible,” Blazy says. “Everything comes down from the leaders. I don’t feel alone at all. We can talk about everything, what’s good, what is not good. But the daily relations are very enjoyable. It feels very much like teamwork. I drive, but the car is full.”

Says Pavlovsky: “Our conversations are very concrete. There’s no blah blah blah.” Most importantly, he is helping Blazy negotiate the “gap between a collection and making billions with the collection. And you cannot make billions if you don’t make things impactful at the boutique. We talk a lot about creation, because that’s the beginning and the impulse of everything. But we have 270 boutiques all over the world.” Fortunately, he concludes, “Blazy is a good student.” And while he doesn’t shoulder the responsibility for making things impactful, he’s very much “an active part of the day-to-day dialogue”.

Success can be just as scary as failure, when you have to sustain and surpass expectations. Blazy’s career is scorching hot. He has opened the doors and allowed in a gust of air. His Chanel is joyful and unexpected. This master technician might well be fashion’s Fred Astaire but his is a complicated choreography. “I feel the pressure,” he says, then sweeps a hand towards the studio. “But the good news is, I love my job.” ■HTSI





The fringe is taking off

This page: BOTTEGA VENETA silk toile shirt, POA, and recycled fibreglass and fringed leather skirt, POA. LE MONDE BÉRYL leather Mica shoes, £590. Throughout (unless otherwise stated): ISABEL MARANT brass earrings, £355
Opposite page: CHANEL double silk satin blouse, £2,700, and silk and feather-embroidered skirt, POA. LE MONDE BÉRYL leather Mica shoes, £590



Photography by *Sonia Szóstak*
Styling by *Isabelle Kountoure*
Model *Sun Mizrahi*



This page: LOUIS VUITTON beaded cape jumpsuit with fringe embellishment, POA. LE MONDE BÉRYL leather Mica shoes, £590
 Opposite page: ISSEY MIYAKE polyester dress with matching textural appliqué, £1,540. LE MONDE BÉRYL eel-effect leather Victoria shoes, £445. CALZEDONIA microfibre tights, £9.99. CAMILLE SURAUULT silver earrings, €300





This page: VICTORIA BECKHAM crepe de chine playsuit with feather appliqué, POA
Opposite page: STELLA MCCARTNEY polyamide-mix and embroidered Fevvers plant-based feather top, POA. LE MONDE BÉRYL eel-effect-leather Victoria shoes, £445





This page: BALENCIAGA cotton poplin top with petal fringe embroidery, £4,390, and wool-silk trousers, £1,090
Opposite page: ALAÏA varnished leather maxi coat with knitted silk fringes, POA. LE MONDE BÉRYL leather Mica shoes, £590





This page: ROKSANDA raffia top, £3,495, and wool and satin trousers, £1,095
Opposite page: INTIMISSIMI modal cashmere-mix high-neck top, £49, LOEWE beaded skirt, £83,450, JUDE leather shoes, £430, CALZEDONIA microfibre tights, £9.99, CAMILLE SURAULT silver earrings, €300

Model, Sun Mizrahi at Premier Casting, Piergiorgio Del Moro and Helena Balladino at DM Casting, Hair, Joe Burwin at Bryant, Make-up, Erin Green at Artist, Photographer's assistants, Pierre Alexandre Nowak and Théophile Parat, Digital operator, Aubane Després, Stylist's assistants, Anne Elizabeth Voortmeijer and Federico Pozzi, Production, Clara Perrotte



CLOSET CONFIDENTIAL

Four style insiders take us on
a tour of their wardrobes



Photography by Will Pippin



Leandra Medine Cohen

Author and fashion writer

Leandra Medine Cohen has created a career out of getting dressed. The New York-based Substacker first made her name in the early 2010s with personal blog-turned-media company *Man Repeller*, which chronicled her irreverent, sometimes offbeat looks. Her ensembles – from coloured tights and blazers to a fringed silk scarf wrapped around the waist as a belt – are now the subject of the twice-weekly newsletter *The Cereal Aisle*.

But when she was choosing the Upper East Side apartment that she moved into six years ago, storage space for her enviable collection of clothes was something of an afterthought. “I wish I had taken my wardrobe needs more seriously but I was thinking more about my family and my kids,” she says. As a result, “my clothes are kind of scattered all over the place”.



**“THE MORE TIME I SPEND
DRESSING, THE LESS
ALIVE THE OUTFIT FEELS”**

The main wardrobe is a walk-in of small proportions and tightly edited pieces; she tries to keep them colour coordinated for easy identification. Button-down shirts and trousers hang on custom rails from The Container Store, while jumpers and tops are neatly folded onto shelves. “I used to fold my jeans but then they would get creases at the bottom and I do whatever I can to avoid ironing,” she admits. She uses a rotational system, keeping her most-worn pairs – Rùadh’s ripped Agnes style and Stevie Dance’s Feel jeans – to the back. “I know that I’m going to reach for them anyway and I want to remember to wear the others.”

Usually, Medine Cohen chooses her jewellery first. Her collection, kept in two dedicated trays, includes gold cuffs and tassel-beaded necklaces, as well as a silver scroller pendant encrusted with coloured gemstones from her recent collaboration with new fashion label Aflalo. “So much of my jewellery is so bold that if I put it

on last, it would end up looking quite chaotic,” she says. Her general approach, though, is to follow her “impulses” and not plan too precisely: “The more time I spend on getting dressed, the less vibrating and alive the outfit feels.”

Every other month, Medine Cohen has a wardrobe purge; she recently auctioned more than 30 of her designer pieces – including turquoise Tom Ford sandals and a shaggy Dries Van Noten jacket – on eBay for charity. “I feel better when I have fewer things,” she says. It does mean, however, that sometimes she will look for a piece only to remember that she sold it or gave it away. Her dream set-up would be more spacious: “an office-closet hybrid, with a window and maybe a little desk in there,” she says. “But that feels like a luxury unknown to me.” **SARA SEMIC**

Left and above: Leandra Medine Cohen in the walk-in wardrobe of her Manhattan apartment, wearing a jacket by Colleen Allen and holding (left) heels by Valentino and (above) trousers by Chloé. Right: a drawer of assorted jewellery





Photography by *Kate Martin*



IT'S FILLED WITH A TETRIS OF RAILS, SHOE BOXES AND DRAWERS

Julia Sarr-Jamois

Stylist, fashion consultant and talent agency owner

"My whole flat is my wardrobe," says Julia Sarr-Jamois. At her apartment in a Grade II-listed Victorian building in London, there's an extensive coat cupboard in the hallway and a wall of shelved sweatshirts, knitwear and denim.

The main event, though, is housed in two original archways in her bedroom, carefully fitted with a Tetris of rails, shoe boxes and drawers. It's open storage, but "the room itself is quite minimal, so it works", she says. Carpentry firm Lupin created custom units in a pippy oak veneer – "very textured, almost tiger-y, and quite warm" – to accommodate different lengths of dresses, trousers and shirts. "It involved a *lot* of measuring," Sarr-Jamois reflects more than once.

She extends the same attention to her organisation systems. The hangers are all black velvet and she affixes a Polaroid to the exterior of each of her shoeboxes so she knows what's kept inside. The grid of jumpers is arranged by colour – with labels to keep the scheme in check. An overflow space downstairs accommodates her "high summer" beachwear wardrobe, which she never bothers to swap into the bedroom (because "summer in London is short-lived").

More than 20 years in fashion has led to an impressive collection: puffer jackets, little black dresses and Bottega Veneta handbags are among her style signatures. But last year Sarr-Jamois undertook "the biggest clear-out since I moved in [in 2019]", she says. "I got rid of about 60 bin bags." So everything fits better now? A sheepish pause. "There's still not enough space." **MARION WILLINGHAM**



One of the two wardrobes set into original archways in Sarr-Jamois's bedroom. Top left: Sarr-Jamois at home. Left: shelves of sweatshirts, knits and denim on the mezzanine



Right: Spinocchia Freund wears a Bottega Veneta dress and Alaïa heels in her walk-in wardrobe, designed to showcase her handbag collection, including some pieces by Chanel (below)



Brigitta Spinocchia Freund

Interior designer and creative director

Featuring curved glass panels and rich walnut wood, the walk-in wardrobe created by Brigitta Spinocchia Freund in her London home is more like a museum showcase than a cupboard. “The idea was to display the bags I’ve been collecting for a long time,” she says.

Among the highlights: Louis Vuitton graffiti designs from the early 2000s and two cross-body bags shaped like milk cartons (in black and silver) from Chanel’s supermarket-inspired AW14 show. She also has a woven-calfskin take on the supermarket basket from the same collection: “A ludicrous thing to buy, really.”

Collecting is about passion rather than practicality. As well as running her eponymous interior design studio,

Spinocchia Freund is a sponsor of the Collect Open platform that supports emerging makers at Collect Art Fair (27 February to 1 March). In terms of clothing, her trove spans vintage 1930s pieces (many sourced from vaunted dealer Virginia Bates), Chanel jackets (“you can throw them over a pair of jeans and a loafer”) and Schiaparelli creations she treasures as sculptural artworks.

Not everything is in regular use. “I loved wearing Vivienne Westwood dresses and corsets in my 20s. I don’t wear them any more – but would I sell them? I’m just not that type of person.” Instead they are digitally archived with Vault Couture, a service that allows one to store pieces offsite then order them in via an online spreadsheet, should the need arise.

Her day-to-day wardrobe, meanwhile, is “mainly suits and shirts, crew-neck jumpers and jeans”, she says. “If a suit is comfortable, it can feel like you’re slouching around in a tracksuit.” Her favourites include “my husband’s that I’ve had tailored”, vintage suits from Liberty Joy Archive, as well as newer pieces from Alex Eagle and Savile Row.

“I’ve designed quite a lot of wardrobes for clients and it can take months to get it right,” says Spinocchia Freund. “Some people like their socks rolled, some like their belts rolled... There’s a lot of ergonomics that go into it.” Organisational elements, such as drawers and dividers, are key. “But the most important thing is lighting,” she concludes. “We always have rails with lighting in them, and I usually back-light the space as well. You need to see what’s going on.” **VICTORIA WOODCOCK**



PHOTOGRAPH: JULIAN ABRAMS



Right: Loehnis in the walk-through wardrobe of her London home, wearing a sweater and pumps by The Row, Saint Laurent jeans and a vintage belt. Above: a collection of Chanel pumps on her shoe shelves. Below: corduroy blazer by Saint Laurent with a vintage belt



***“I HAVE ONE CRAZY-LONG RAIL
THAT’S JUST SHIRTS FOR DAYS”***



A selection of shirts,
including Yves Saint Laurent,
Charvet and Rubirosa

Alison Loehnis

Fashion executive, adviser and consultant

“It’s not *Clueless*, for better or for worse,” says Alison Loehnis. The former interim CEO and president of Yoox Net-A-Porter is comparing the wardrobe at her west London home with Alicia Silverstone’s ’90s film-set version – and coming up significantly smaller. “It looks lovely but it’s not super-sophisticated,” she says of her walk-in of custom cabinetry, painted a chic deep blue, which inhabits a “fiddly space between the bedroom and the bathroom”. The design was created by Claire Sá, one half of husband-and-wife architecture studio De Rosee Sa. “Of all the things we did in the house, the wardrobe was probably the most iterative,” says Loehnis. Her brief was functionality: “I don’t need it to look like a shop, I just want to get to my stuff. I like to keep it pretty user-friendly.”

Moveable shelves accommodate seasonal shifts – from boots to sandals, for example. “And things that

for whatever reason I don’t feel like wearing this season” are rehomed elsewhere. “I don’t want them under my nose. Overspill isn’t stuff I don’t like; overspill is just ‘I’m not wearing it right now’.”

Change is afoot in Loehnis’s career. One current iron in the fire is a senior advisory role at JP Morgan, but she is “taking some time to think about my next chapter”. She has recently consolidated her uniform. “Maybe this is part of being older but I’ve narrowed down on pieces I love,” she says. “I love jackets – blazers specifically. And I’m obsessed with shirts. I have one crazy-long rail that is just shirts for days.” Her favourite Charvet design is present in multiple colours. Favourite Saint Laurent pieces, worn on “high rotation”, are from collections that debuted years ago.

Other particularly cherished pieces, meanwhile, were inherited from her mother, whom she credits with sparking her love of fashion. Any hand-me-downs remain a family affair: “I have a teenage daughter who is very interested in what I might be giving away.” **VW ■ HTSI**

Photography by *Dean Hearne*



FENDI embellished cotton dress, £5,800. MIU MIU cotton canvas trainers, £780. Throughout: VAN CLEEF & ARPELS gold Zodiaque bracelet, £2,480. TIFFANY & CO gold and diamond Elsa Peretti Five Bean bracelet, £14,100. CECE JEWELLERY gold, enamel and diamond Wild Horse signet ring, £4,990. MARKS & SPENCER cotton socks, £8 for pack of two

Micro dosing

SPRING'S HEMLINE
PRESCRIPTION IS SHORT,
SHORT, SHORT

Photography by *Olimpia Taliani de Marchio*

Styling by *Benjamin Canares*

Model *Adit Priscilla*





This page: CHLOÉ organic cotton top, £2,350, and
cotton jersey trousers, £1,130

Opposite page: LOUIS VUITTON silk dress with brocade collar,
£5,000. DIOR leather Medallion buckle loafers, £1,430



This page: MIU
MIU silk cloqué
dress, £6,300, and
cotton canvas
trainers, £780

Opposite page:
BURBERRY
vinyl-coated
raffia-effect
Summerside
trench coat,
£2,890. EMILIA
WICKSTEAD silk
twill dress, £800.
DIOR leather
Medallion buckle
loafers, £1,430







This page: DIOR silk shirt with necktie, £2,170, cotton gabardine skirt, £1,200, and leather Medallion buckle loafers, £1,430

Opposite page: ULLA JOHNSON cotton Matteo jacket, £975, and linen Doria skirt, £590. SHUSHU TONG cotton top, POA

Model, Aditi Priscilla at The Squad. Casting, Piergiorgio Del Moro and Helena Ballardino at DM Casting. Hair, Paula McCash using Babyliiss. Make-up, Jimmy Owen Jones. Manicure, Saffron Goddard using Dior. Photographer's assistants, Kae Homma and Ryan James. Stylist's assistant, Roshni Sukhlecha. Post-production, Forme Studio. Production, Town Productions



Carmen Busquets sits on the Paulin Paulin Paulin Dune sofa in her Key Biscayne home. Artworks in her collection include (on left wall) *Prismes Et Miroirs – DBPF 1A*, 2019, by Daniel Buren; (on wall by window) *Try Counting Sheep*, 2011, by Rashid Johnson; and (on mirrored table at right) *Evergreen*, 2024, by Soraya Abu Naba'a. The ceramic vases behind Busquets are by Simphiwe Mbunyuza. The pieces on the glass table to the left are by the Haas Brothers



Unicorn status

Carmen Busquets bet big on ecommerce – and won. Her Key Biscayne penthouse reflects her enterprising taste. By *Jill Krasny*

Photography by *Josh Aronson*

Let's say you're a wildly successful entrepreneur, investor and philanthropist who craves all-white interiors, dramatically open spaces and beach sunsets fit for a postcard. Where do you buy your slice of paradise? One obvious option is Florida's Key Biscayne, the exclusive island retreat just south of Miami Beach. And if you're Carmen Busquets, the so-called fairy godmother of fashion ecommerce, you buy a sprawling beachfront penthouse where the storied Sonesta Beach Resort once stood and stuff it with bespoke design and contemporary art.

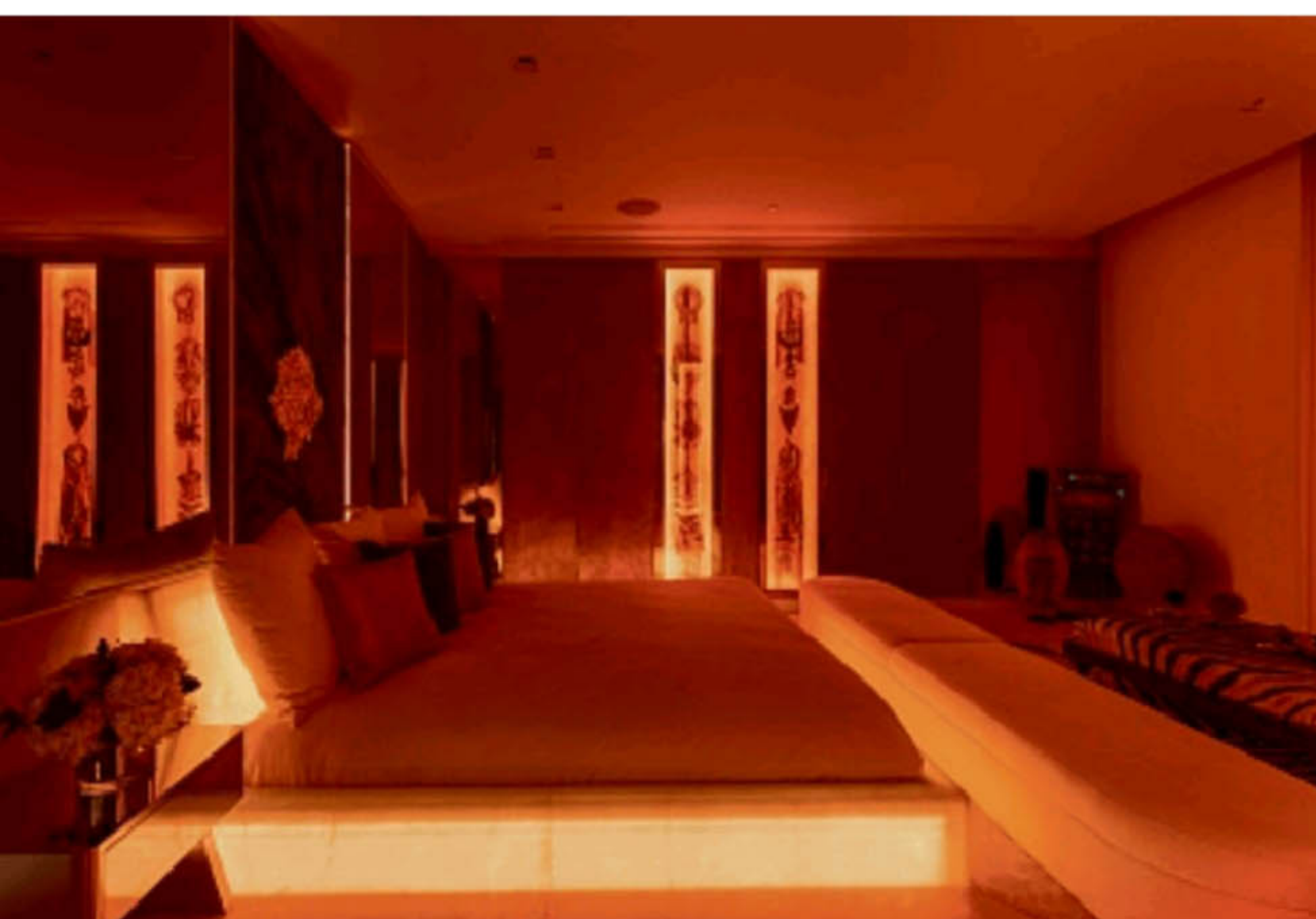
"I was like, 'Oh my God, what happened to it?'" she recalls of seeing her one-time hangout demolished in 2006. Wearing a flowing red Vita Kin dress, Gabriela Hearst sandals and L'Heure Bleue perfume by Guerlain, she explains that the shock didn't deter her. Instead, she felt drawn to the spot that a decade later would be her home. "I just had the feeling that I would love to live where the Sonesta was," says the feisty 60-year-old. When she learned that the site was earmarked for a 142-condominium building, she researched the reputation of its Argentine developer, Consultatio, and staked her claim.

Venezuela-born Busquets has an eye for investment. The list of fashion and media platforms she has financed includes The Business of Fashion, Moda Operandi, Farfetch and Lyst. In 2000, she bought an initial 14 per cent stake in Net-A-Porter for £250,000; when the company was sold in 2015, the business was valued at about £950mn. She went on to found (and fold) CoutureLab, an ecommerce site for craftspeople, which later became an investment vehicle for emerging luxury startups.

Her most recent investment, though, is linked to Matches. In December it was announced that the London-based retailer, which went into administration in 2024, was being rebooted by Hulcan, a newly formed luxury group helmed by Mario Maher and Joe Wilkinson,



Left: *Butterfly Kid (Girl) III*, 2015, by Yinka Shonibare stands on a Zaha Hadid Liquid Glacial table in the living area; the rope stools are by Christian Astuguevieille and the stainless-steel coffee tables (to the left) are by Arik Levy. Below left: the master bedroom, where the onyx bed was designed by Busquets in collaboration with Adam Wasilewski of D-Coded International. Bottom left: the building's pool seen from the balcony of Busquets' penthouse



founders of the members-only shopping app Mile. They feel fortunate to have Busquets' support. "She is a true industry insider with a rare understanding of brands, customers and business," says Wilkinson.

"They're building the business the way I did," says Busquets, referring to her first launch, Cabus, a boutique in Caracas. It rarely held overstock beyond the last two seasons, which was efficient. It also helped boost profits.

Busquets has strong ties to Miami: her mother's Cuban family migrated there after the Bay of Pigs invasion in 1961, and she visited the city frequently as a girl. Her Catalan father was a metallurgist. "My mother was a sociologist and anthropologist, so

her curiosity was endless," she says. Their visits to couturiers together sparked a lifelong interest in fashion. She also found it a useful tool for self-expression, given the struggles she had with communicating (at 22, she learnt she was partially deaf; later still, she found out she was dyslexic). Did either issue ever deter her? "Oh no, it didn't," she says emphatically.

She has owned the penthouse since the building's completion in 2014. When she got the keys to the space, though, she was horrified by the layout. "I hated it," says Busquets, who also owns homes in Verbier and Paris. "The reason I bought this apartment was to be able to see the sunrise and sunset." That required two years of "undoing the walls".

Initially, there were eight bedrooms; now there are five. Ceilings rose 10cm. The dining room disappeared. The kitchen, which was partially closed off, is now mostly open. Only one bathroom and the load-bearing walls survived. "I don't have children," says Busquets, striding toward the long hallway that leads to the bedrooms. "You close the rooms when you have children. You want to hide somewhere."

It's a rare cloudy day in Miami, but the ocean's horizon is still visible from the U-shaped balcony. All is quiet except for the low hum of the elevator, which opens on to the 13th floor. Two large digital images by the Shanghai-based art collective Liu Dao greet visitors upon their arrival. Nearby, Busquets has installed a computer animation by American artist Jennifer Steinkamp of fluttering butterflies.

Colour is a theme throughout her art collection. In the living area, an installation of neon-painted aluminium flowers is by Florida artist Soraya Abu Naba'a. The furniture, meanwhile, stands out for its beauty and versatility. "Everything has to be flexible," she says. Israeli designer Arik Levy's polished stainless-steel coffee tables join together to make one large table or double as ottomans; two marble-clad kitchen islands roll across the wooden floors on castors and can be commandeered to serve cheese trays and wine, or function as sushi bars when she's entertaining. She also hosts pyjama parties with friends.

For years, the sloping cushions of Paulin Paulin's Dune sofa were moved around when friends came to visit. Then Busquets, an avid reader, panicked: "Where am I going to put all my books?" Benjamin Paulin, son of the brand's namesake designer, solved the problem with a custom bookshelf set discreetly beneath the cushions, albeit with one caveat: it locks the seats in place.

Busquets likes being able to rearrange things as the mood suits her. She would even sell the penthouse if she found the right buyer. "I see it as selling a company," she says. "You need someone with more money and power to match your emotional attachment."

But one constant is her love of craftsmanship. An intriguing example in her home is the hemp rope stools by Christian Astuguevieille. The French artistic director for fashion houses and fragrance brands such as Hermès and Comme des Garçons Parfums, as well as a creator of sculptural furniture, is one of many artists Busquets has remained loyal to since her CoutureLab days.

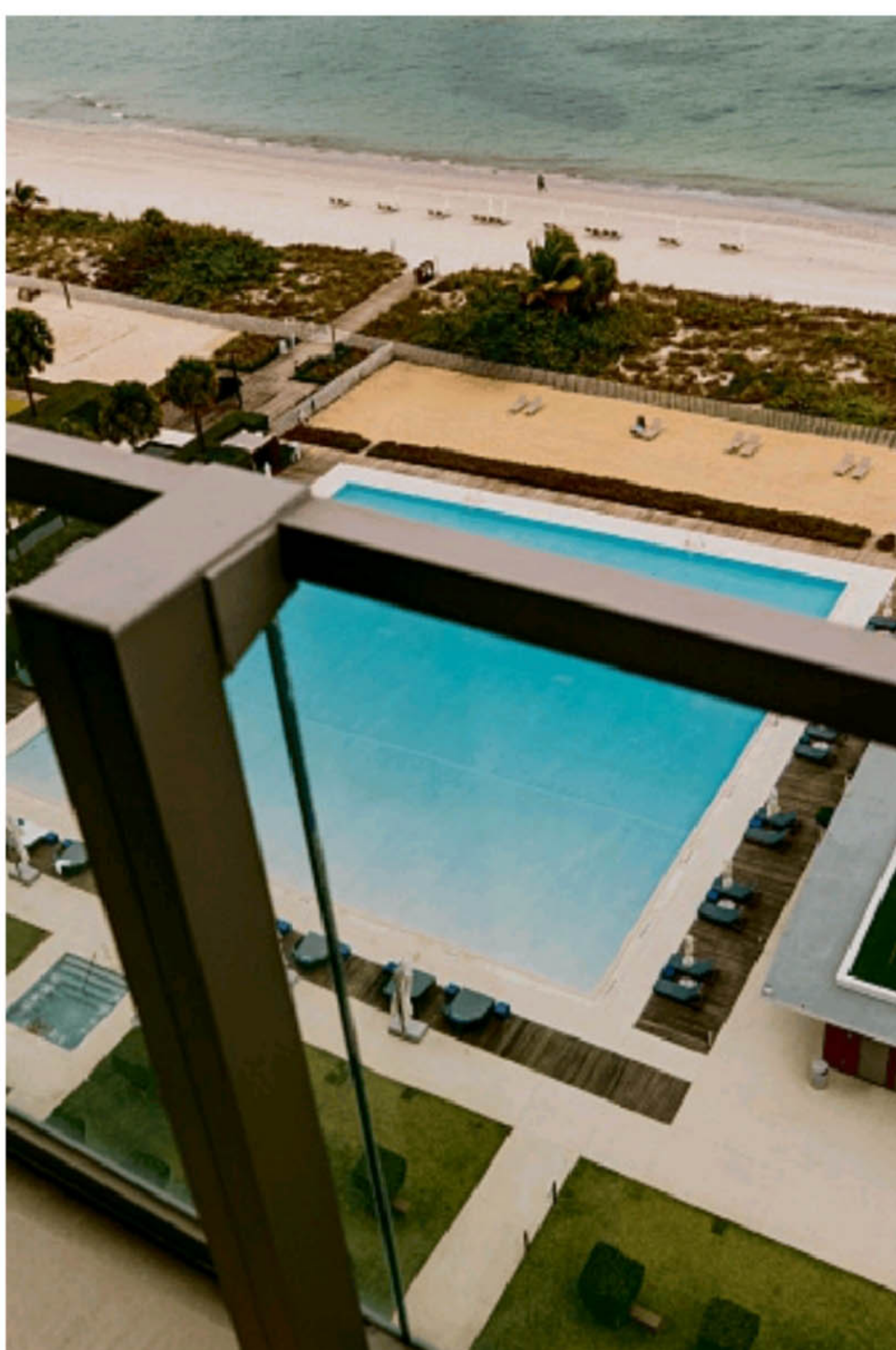
Last year, she launched the Carmen Busquets Foundation, a philanthropic initiative to honour her late mother and support education and other forms of creative impact. She also debuted the Carmen Busquets Couture Prize at the Latin American Fashion Awards to celebrate the creators blending "heritage craftsmanship with innovation, slow fashion principles, sustainability and cultural significance".

In her home, she doesn't shy away from artworks that are politically charged. On one wall, photos by the Venezuelan-American artist Lisu Vega "show how eight million Venezuelans migrated as a result of 25 years of oppression", she says. (She does not think that President Trump's removal of Nicolás Maduro will solve "the complex problem of Venezuela".) Another series consists of life-sized portraits of Native American women by artist-curator Dyani White Hawk. "More than your desire", reads one woman's black T-shirt.

There's plenty of room, too, for the playful – such as her assortment of cast bronze Mini Beasts by the LA-based Haas Brothers, artist twins Simon and Nikolai. "I love them," she says of the furry creatures that she moves from room to room. "I live in a world where everything has to be perfect," she says of the fashion industry. "But inside we cover our little monsters."

The master bedroom has the calm of a meditation space, where the bed itself is wrought in clear onyx – a collaboration with Adam Wasilewski of Miami- and London-based stonework specialist D-Coded International. Her roomy walk-in closet, meanwhile, is a riot of colour. The racks groan with couture and every piece has been dutifully categorised. Shoes rest in boxes with laminated labels such as "Hunting Boots" and "Stilettos". "It needs to be as practical as I am," she says of the space.

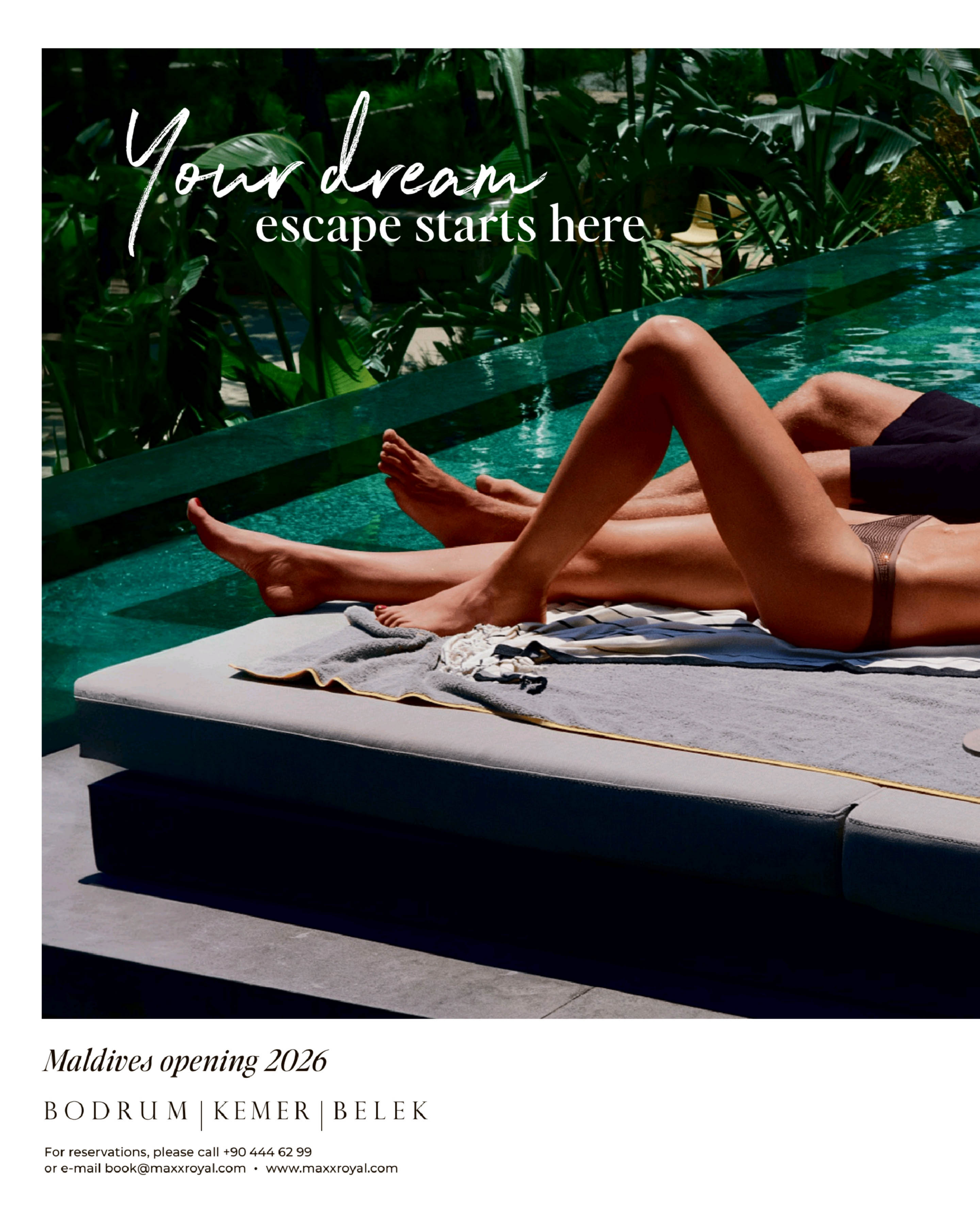
Fittingly, Busquets loves seeing reactions to her singular home. As if on cue, a UPS man appears in the elevator, his trolley holding a stack of large boxes. On his way back out, he pauses to look around. "This is everyone's favourite," he says, gesturing toward the butterflies. "That makes me happy," she says. Her sparkling eyes show she means it. ■ HTSI



“THE REASON I BOUGHT
THIS APARTMENT WAS TO
BE ABLE TO SEE THE
SUNRISE AND SUNSET”



Busquets in her TV room, sitting on a beaded Spotley Cru chair by the Haas Brothers, beside a Christian Astuguevieille ottoman. The sliding panels on the wall are *Bambi and the Cat-Woman in the Garden of Delights (after Bosch)*, 2004, by Walter Goldfarb

A couple is relaxing on a grey lounge chair with a blue and white striped towel. They are positioned next to a swimming pool with a dark blue tiled edge. The background is filled with lush green tropical plants, including large banana leaves. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day.

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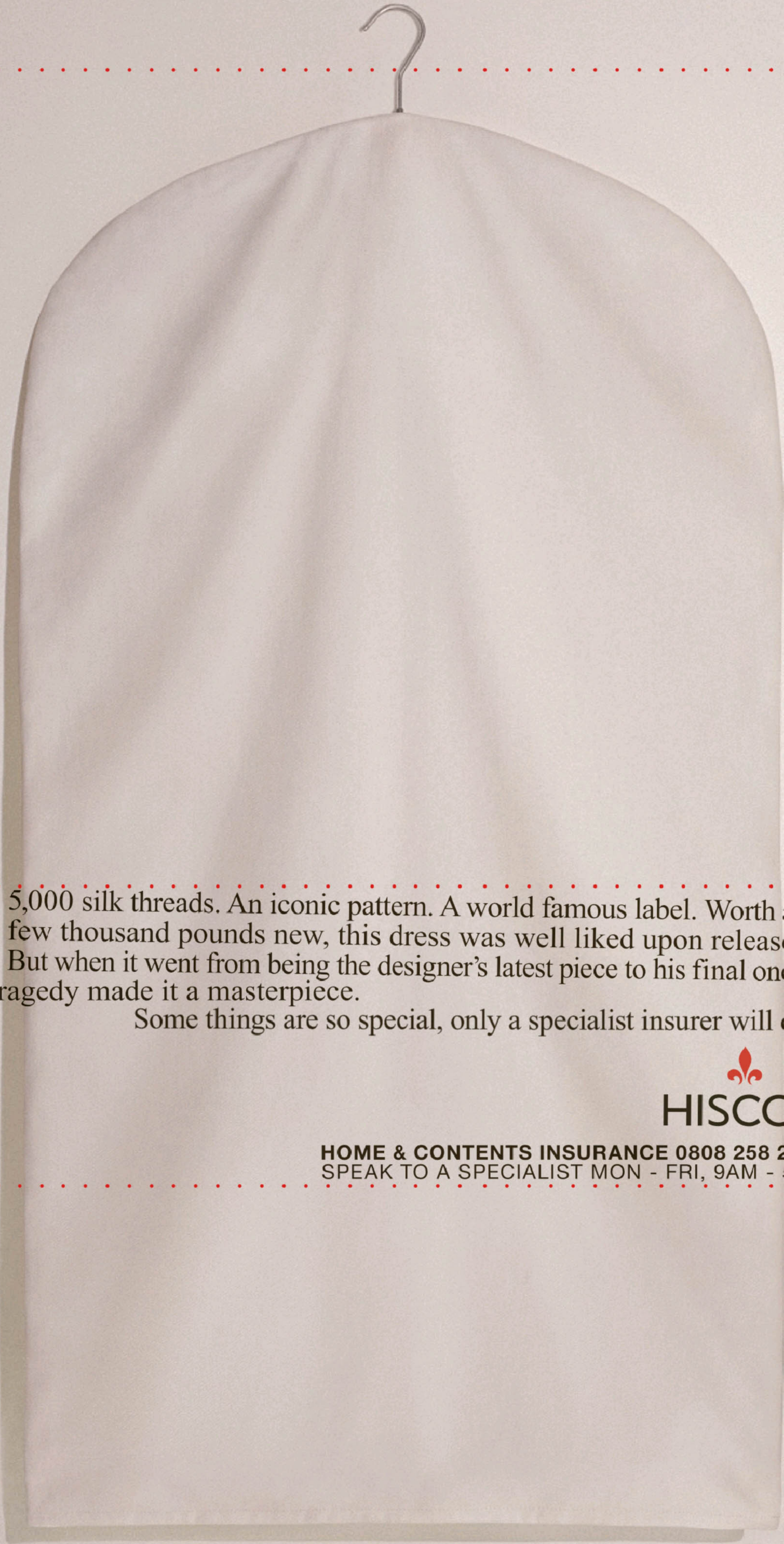
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THE BAR AT BIX WITH MURALS BY MINDY LEHRMAN CAMERON



My first memory of San Francisco was visiting with my parents to get my US citizenship when I was eight or nine. I was born in Afghanistan and came to the US a year and a half later.

We landed in Montana and moved to Fremont, a sprawling city in California's Bay Area, shortly after. That's pretty much where I grew up.

Fremont is only about 45 minutes outside of San Francisco. But that first visit – going to the big city and seeing the Golden Gate Bridge – was really eye-opening. I knew immediately that I was a city girl. I was like, "Oh my God – this is the life I'm destined for."

San Francisco is known to be at the sort of liberal forefront of everything. There's so much diversity and it's always been about

WHEN I CAME HERE I WAS LIKE, THIS IS THE LIFE I'M DESTINED FOR

being free and living your best life. I moved to New York in 2008 to pursue my career as a make-up artist, working my way up to collaborate with brands including Celine, Chanel,

Calvin Klein and The Row. But when I come back – a few times a year – it feels like a homecoming. The Bay Area definitely has an influence when I think about the looks I'm drawn to. Chicana culture [a movement that emerged from Mexican-American communities] was really popular when I was growing up – there was a lot of winged eyeliner, dark lips and blue eyeshadow. I worked in beauty retail here at Neiman



HOW TO SPEND IT IN...

SAN FRANCISCO

Make-up artist Fara Homidi finds beauty in the city's sunsets, steakhouses and rooftop bars

AS TOLD TO **ROSANNA DODDS**
PHOTOGRAPHY BY **AARON WOJACK**



A TAMALES COCKTAIL AT ALCHEMIST BAR & LOUNGE



Marcus, which is still where I go if I have an event and need to find something.

Now when I'm in San Francisco, it's mostly for work; the US HQ of Sephora, a large-scale stockist of my eponymous beauty brand, is based here. I often stay at the Hyatt Regency in the airport. You're thinking, "Is that not kind of shabby?" But it's one of my favourite hotels. A more historic option is Sir Francis Drake [now the Beacon Grand]. It's very San Francisco – quite gaudy with a lot of old-fashioned-looking furniture. But it's an experience.

I also stay at The Ritz-Carlton for events with Sephora from time to time. They have something called the Sephora Brand Summit, where anyone who's anyone from every brand is invited to experience the company's big year-in-review. There are

Above: Fara Homidi outside Neiman Marcus. Far left: the recently reopened Beauty Bar, a favourite nightspot



Above:
Homidi in Bix
restaurant
and (below)
its exterior

lots of panel talks, and there's usually one night where everyone has a nice dinner and we all hit the bar. It's your moment to represent your brand, show up and show out. Everyone's dressed to the nines.

This isn't the type of town that pops up a bunch of new restaurants. New York is very that; London is very that. San Francisco, not so much. I tend to stick to the classics. I love Cotogna in Jackson Square, a beautiful Italian restaurant with indoor and outdoor seating. The menu is seasonal: just ask the waiter what the best thing is right now.

Nearby, Bix is a fun place to go with a group. It's kind of grandiose

with a steakhouse feel — all wood and rich burgundies. They have this take on steak au poivre which is ground meat that's

really crispy at the edges. Growing up, I'd also go to Steps of Rome with my friends. It's kitschy but fun and you can't go wrong with any of the pasta there.

San Francisco can be really cold, windy and

foggy. In the summer you have about two weeks of perfect weather, and if you go to any event in the Golden Gate Park during that time, it's the most magical experience ever. Everyone's got their blankets out, they're picnicking, they're talking to each other. In the '90s we went to Lilith Fair, an all-female music festival — we saw Annie Lennox, Jewel and Sade.

SOME OF MY BEST MEMORIES have been at The Warfield, an intimate venue where you can see your favourite bands up close. And I love Beauty Bar in the Mission District, which is like New York's SoHo. It closed in 2024 — I was heartbroken because you could go there at any time and know it was going to be the best night — but it recently reopened. I also go to the Alchemist Bar & Lounge or Top of the Mark on Nob Hill. You take an elevator up to the very tip-top of the Mark Hopkins hotel to a beautiful bar with a 360-degree view of San Francisco. Everyone goes to dance.



Above:
Homidi in the
Mission District.
Right: Neiman
Marcus. Bottom
right: outside
Horsies Market
& Saloon in the
Mission District

BARS, CAFÉS & RESTAURANTS

Alchemist Bar & Lounge
alchemistsf.com
Beauty Bar [@beautybarsf](https://www.instagram.com/beautybarsf)
Bix bixrestaurant.com
Cotogna cotognasf.com
Horsies Market & Saloon
3368 19th St, 94110
Steps of Rome stepsofromesf.com
Top of the Mark topofthemark.com

SHOPPING

Fara Homidi farahomidi.com
Neiman Marcus neimanmarcus.com
Sephora sephora.com

THINGS TO DO

Golden Gate Park sfrecpark.org
The Warfield
thewarfieldtheatre.com

WHERE TO STAY

Beacon Grand beacongrand.com
Hyatt Regency San Francisco
Airport hyatt.com
The Ritz-Carlton, San Francisco
ritzcarlton.com

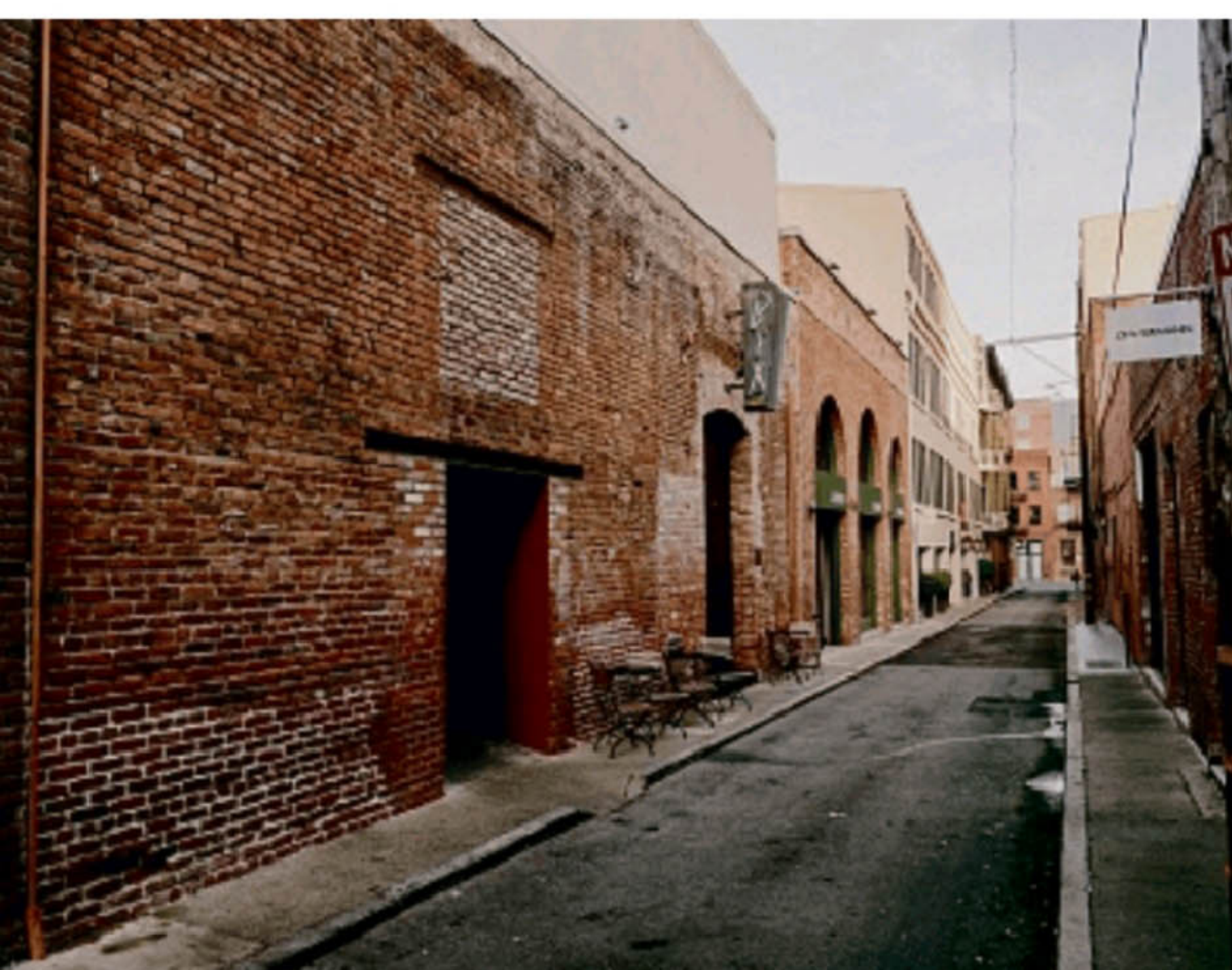
BISTECCA
ALLA
FIORENTINA
AT COTOGNA



Fisherman's Wharf is a great place to walk around and eat seafood. Around 20 minutes out of the city in Berkeley, Telegraph Avenue is somewhere you could spend a day vintage shopping. And if you love hikes, there are lots around here, some starting right under the Golden Gate Bridge.

The Bay Area is very nature-oriented.

A lot of people are active, and it's so beautiful that you want to do that sunset walk or bike ride. There's a different type of air here; it's lush with trees and greenery. And it feels like that creates a certain type of person — they're confident but not overly flashy. The fashion feels very sporty: quilted vests and tennis shoes. I love that, because it's not really about what you're wearing here. It's more about who you are. ■HTSI



PHOTOGRAPH: ØVIND HAUG

The image shows a sophisticated lounge or lobby area. In the center, a large, curved, dark-colored sofa is arranged in a semi-circle. It is accented with several bright orange-red throw pillows. In front of the sofa, there are several low, dark, rectangular tables. Some of these tables hold small, white, decorative floral arrangements. The floor is made of dark, polished wood, which reflects the ambient light. The walls are composed of large, dark, rectangular panels. Several tall, slender, curved pillars support the ceiling. Warm, orange-toned pendant lamps are suspended from the ceiling, casting a soft glow. The overall atmosphere is modern and elegant.

ARMANI
HOTEL DUBAI

EMAAR

COLLECTING

Silver pin cushions can be toy-like: miniature animals with squat velvet backs, often no bigger than a matchbox. Many have the charm of a Monopoly counter. Recently they have drifted into the wider visual culture: Jonathan Anderson celebrated his Dior debut last year with an image of a silver pin cushion in the shape of a frog, its back studded with pins, playfully emphasising the fashion house's commitment to savoir-faire.

"It's one category of collectable silver that's still fairly strong," says David Buck of Steppes Hill Farm Antiques, which has sold pin cushions in the form of fish, hedgehogs and swans over the years. "It's been on the increase, certainly in the past five years." The market "is active but niche", confirms Georgina Agnew, head of silver at auction house Roseberys. "As they are no longer used for sewing, value is driven by collectability, novelty and design rather than utility."

Early pins were costly and more often kept in cases than embedded in fabric; it was only in the 14th century that stuffed pin pillows were first documented in Europe. These old, rare examples command the highest prices. "The most valuable are those from the late 1680s and 1690s, which are decorated with chasing in the rare chinoiserie style," explains Harry Williams-Bulkeley, head of silver at Christie's. In 2021, it sold a chinoiserie-style William

CURRENTLY IN STOCK IS AN EDWARDIAN RHINOCEROS AND A SITTING KANGAROO

and Mary silver pin cushion for \$2,750.

In the 19th century, as industrial production made sewing implements widely affordable, pin cushions became a common domestic

accessory. By the late Victorian period, practicality had given way to decoration, with pin cushions migrating from workbaskets to dressing tables and mantelpieces, produced in increasingly fanciful forms. Silver examples occupied a middle ground: not luxury objects, but aspirational gifts and trinkets.

Most of these silver pieces "were only made over a short period of time", says Buck, placing production "from the late 1800s through to 1920". At the time, he adds, "they were relatively cheap". Most were produced in Birmingham, particularly during the Edwardian period, by prolific makers such as Adie & Lovekin and Levi & Salaman, while London firms, including Sampson Mordan, also contributed designs. Surviving examples vary widely in condition, and originality carries weight.

For collectors today, animal-form pin cushions provide both an accessible entry point and a ladder of rarity. Familiar figures – pigs, chicks and elephants – are widely encountered and often form the backbone of early collections. Robert Bush Antiques has a hatching chick for sale for £395, dated to 1909, while Hemswell Antique Centre has an Edwardian pig cushion by Adie & Lovekin with an original navy fabric back for £230.

Rarer animals command a premium. Buck notes that "the lion is one of the more desirable ones", while Agnew cites "camels, giraffes and monkeys" as among the scarcest. "More widely available examples often sell for around £150 to £300," says



ACCESSORIES

SILVER PIN CUSHIONS

Rosalind Jana hunts down Lilliputian pillows with outsized charm

1 Silver Crouching Cat pin cushion by Adie & Lovekin, Birmingham, c1907, sold by Roseberys for £1,066. 2 Edwardian silver Farman III Biplane pin cushion by Crisford & Norris, Birmingham, 1909, £1,950 (reserved), steppeshillfarmantiques.com. 3 Early-20th-century Austro-Hungarian silver pin cushion by the Wiener Werkstätte, Vienna, c1905, sold by Roseberys for £5,460. 4 William and Mary silver pin cushion by Thomas Jenkins, London, 1691, sold by Christie's for \$2,750



Above: DIOR SS26 silver pin cushion. 5 Silver Fan pin cushion by Henry Matthews, Birmingham, 1912, £755, bexfield.co.uk. 6 Edwardian silver miniature Coronation Chair pin cushion by Levi & Salaman, Birmingham, 1901, £695, bexfield.co.uk. 7 Edwardian silver Hairy Pig and Cart pin cushion by Adie & Lovekin, Birmingham, 1909, £750, steppeshillfarmantiques.com. 8 Edwardian silver Golden Pheasant pin cushion by Sampson Mordan & Co, Chester, 1905, sold by Steppes Hill Farm Antiques for £750



Agnew, while "exceptional pieces in good condition can exceed £1,000 at auction", with rarer models "around £1,500 to £2,000". AC Silver has an Edwardian rhinoceros and a sitting kangaroo, both priced at £1,995.

For collector and dealer Kelvin Reay, who has been selling antiques for more than 40 years, it's all about creature appeal. "I collect them because they're pretty, teeny-weeny little things," he says. "I tended to veer towards buying animals, and I would only keep one if they were perfect." He numbers pheasants, goats, rabbits and bulls among his own menagerie. "There is an element of investment; furniture is worth nothing now but small, collectable pieces of silver have held their own price."

The category does stray from the expected. Buck points to an Edwardian novelty silver pin cushion made in the form of a Farman III biplane, which he currently has in his collection. Made in Birmingham in 1909 by Crisford & Norris – the same year the aircraft first flew – it is constructed from silver wire and thin sheet silver and comes complete with revolving propeller and wheels. Daniel Bexfield Antiques also offers some unusual curios, including a miniature coronation chair (£695), a fan (£755) and a bell (£335).

OCCASIONALLY PIN CUSHIONS transcend novelty altogether. Agnew recalls a Wiener Werkstätte silver pin cushion sold at Roseberys from the collection of Geoffrey and Fay Elliott in 2022. Elliott, a former secret service operative-turned-writer, and his wife were intellectually curious collectors, drawn as much to ideas as to objects. This particular cushion was produced around 1905 and almost certainly made by Josef Husnik, a silversmith operating in a workshop that treated even the smallest household objects as part of a *Gesamtkunstwerk*. The piece takes the shape of a small, trellised dome wreathed in greenery. At auction, it realised £5,460: a striking sum for an object that can sit in the palm of a hand, and a reminder that the most compelling examples condense far more than charm into their tiny frames.

Dealers encourage newcomers to buy with their eyes. "First of all, you've got to like it," says dealer Daniel Bexfield. "It's really about what you enjoy and what appeals to you." Size can mislead: "With pin cushions, invariably they're more expensive the smaller they are."

Condition, as with all forms of collecting, is also critical. Buck points to silver's vulnerability to dents and distortion. And an original cushion, which will show natural signs of age, matters almost as much as well-cared-for silver. "The internet and eBay are full of things that have been re-cushioned," Bexfield says. "There are a lot of fakes. With old pin cushions, the original cushion is very firm" – while replacements "just look like a new bit of velvet... and often they're quite squidgy". Completeness still matters. "People do love pigs: check to make sure both ears are there." ■HTSI

WHERE TO BUY

AC Silver acsilver.co.uk
Christie's christies.com
Daniel Bexfield Antiques
bexfield.co.uk
Hemswell Antique Centre
hemswell-antiques.com
Steppes Hill Farm Antiques
steppeshillfarmantiques.com
Robert Bush Antiques
robertbushantiques.co.uk
Roseberys roseberys.co.uk

WHAT TO READ

Silver: A Practical Guide to Collecting Silverware and Identifying Hallmarks by Joel Langford (Chartwell House)

WHERE TO SEE

The Metropolitan Museum of Art metmuseum.org
The V&A vam.ac.uk

DESCRIPTION A body lotion with 42% oil. INDICATION Significantly increases skin moisturisation. PRESENTATION White fluid. FORMULATION Lotion with 42% occlusive ingredients and 14% humectants. INGREDIENTS Aqua, Dimethicone, Isopropyl Palmitate, Ethylhexyl Cocoate, Isododecane, Isopropyl Myristate, Urea, Polyglyceryl-2 Dipolyhydroxystearate, Glycerin, Pentylene Glycol, Dicaprylyl Carbonate, Polyglyceryl-3 Diisostearate, Sodium Lactate, Dipentaerythryl Hexacaprylate / Hexacaprates, Gluconolactone, Rosa Canina Fruit Oil, Simmondsia Chinensis Seed Oil, Calendula Officinalis Extract, Butyrospermum Parkii Oil, Helianthus Annuus Seed Oil, Glycine Soja Oil, Isostearyl Isostearate, Bisabolol, Octyldodecyl PCA, Retinyl Palmitate, Tocopheryl Acetate, Linoleic Acid, Linolenic Acid, Tocopherol, Sodium PCA, Sodium Hyaluronate, Lactic Acid, Stearalkonium Hectorite, Propylene Carbonate. DRY SKIN CLINICAL TRIAL Trial centre: Complife Italia S.r.l, Italy. Objective: A clinical evaluation to test the efficacy of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion in improving skin moisturisation. Sample: Subjects: 30 healthy female participants with Fitzpatrick skin types II-V and clinically showing dry / very dry skin at the level of the outer lower legs. Test site: test product applied to an outer, lower leg of all subjects. Age of participants: 25–65. Methodology: Split body, evaluator-blinded, randomised and controlled clinical-instrumental study. Participants washed their legs with soap to induce dry skin over a 7-day period. Baseline clinical and instrumental evaluations were taken. Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was applied twice daily for 28 days to the assigned lower lateral leg, the opposite leg remained untreated. Clinical assessments and instrumental evaluations were conducted on days 1, 3, 6, 8, 10, 14, 21 and 28. The control untreated site was also evaluated at all time points. Subjects were clinically graded for dryness (on a scale from 0–5) by a trained visual evaluator. Quantitative measurement of skin hydration was by Corneometer. Quantitative measurement of transepidermal water loss (TEWL) as an indicator of barrier function, was by Tewameter. Additionally, a self-assessment questionnaire was completed on days 8 and 14. Result: Compared to the untreated area, treatment with Bio-Oil® Body Lotion resulted in a statistically significant improvement in clinical grading of dryness, Tewameter and Corneometer measurements, from as early as day 1, and at all time points. For clinical grading of dryness, statistically significant improvements were evident in 96.7% of participants from day 14 onwards, almost double the improvement noted at day 1. After 28 days of use, 100% of participants showed a significant increase in skin moisturisation, with the extent of the improvement almost 4 times that at day 1. Similarly, after 28 days of use 100% of participants showed a significant decrease in TEWL, with the extent of the improvement more than double that at day 1. These findings are supported by the results of the self-assessment questionnaire. DRY SKIN USER TRIAL Trial centre: Ayton Global Research, United Kingdom. Objective: To assess the performance of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion as a body moisturiser. Sample: Subjects: 119 female participants in good health. Age of participants: 25–65. Methodology: A 2-week, single-placement, in-home user trial. Participants were instructed to apply product twice daily, morning and evening. Massage into skin until fully absorbed. Three short questionnaires were completed: the first after initial application, the second after 12 hours, and the third after 2 weeks of using the product. Result: Application: 95% of participants agreed that 'the product is lighter than any moisturiser they have used before'. 93% of participants agreed that 'the product spreads more easily than any moisturiser they have used before'. Absorption: 82% of participants agreed that 'the product absorbs more easily than any moisturiser they have used before'. 75% of participants agreed that 'the product absorbs quicker than any moisturiser they have used before'. 74% of participants agreed that 'the product leaves no greasy residue on the skin after use'. 86% of participants agreed that 'after applying the product they were able to get dressed immediately'. Hydration: 93% of participants agreed that 'the product leaves skin feeling immediately moisturised'. 92% of the participants agreed that 'after applying the product their skin feels smooth and silky'. 90% of participants agreed that 'their skin felt moisturised the entire day' and 91% agreed that 'their skin feels smooth and silky the entire day'. 92% of participants agreed that 'their skin looks better than it did at the beginning of the 2-week period'. Overall: 73% of participants agreed that 'the product is better than any moisturiser they have used before'. SENSITIVE SKIN TEST Trial centre: Complife Italia S.r.l, Italy. Objective: To assess the potential of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion to cause skin irritation. Sample: Subjects: 25 participants; 3 males and 22 females, all with sensitive skin according to acetic acid stinging test. Age of participants: 18–70. Methodology: Controlled study. Two areas were evaluated: area to which a negative control was applied (demineralised water) and an area to which Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was applied. Test products were applied to the back region of participants, in contact with the skin surface, for a period of 48 hours using a Finn Chamber®. Skin reactions were evaluated under the supervision of a dermatologist, to assess primary skin irritation at 15 minutes, 1 hour and 24 hours after patch removal. Skin reactions were rated on a scale from 0–4 (with 0 being no erythema, oedema, or other types of skin irritation, and 4 being serious erythema and oedema, indicating dark red appearance and extended swelling beyond the application area). Result: The skin tolerability of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was deemed 'non-irritating'. NON-COMEDOGENIC TEST Trial centre: Complife Italia S.r.l, Italy. Objective: To assess the comedogenic potential of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion. Sample: Subjects: 20 participants; 14 females and 6 males of varying ethnicities with acne prone skin. Age of participants: 18–65. Methodology: Controlled study. The product was applied on a disk of filter paper to the upper back region of participants. Patches were left in place for 48 to 72 hours, removed and applied again. A total of 12 patches were applied for 4 consecutive weeks. Three areas were evaluated by comparing a negative control (demineralised water), the test product (Bio-Oil® Body Lotion) and a positive control (anhydrous alcohol, a known comedogenic product). Skin reactions were clinically evaluated under the supervision of a dermatologist 15 minutes after the removal of each patch to compare the presence of comedones before and after each product application. Result: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was found to be non-comedogenic. The area to which Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was applied showed no significant difference to the negative control area. The positive control induced acne. VISCOSITY STUDY Trial centre: Ayton Global Research, South Africa. Objective: An internal study to assess the dynamic viscosity of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion compared to similar moisturising products. Comparison of Bio-Oil® Body Lotion to 13 moisturising products manufactured by 10 global brands with an established history in moisturising. Methodology: Dynamic viscosity was read using an Anton Paar Rheolab QC rheometer, using spindle CC 39, speed: 200 rpm at 20°C, temperature controlled. Result: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion was found to have a 7.5 times lower dynamic viscosity than the average of the competitor products (94 cP), which was respectively, indicating a thinner, lighter fluid that's more easily and rapidly absorbed. APPLICATION How to apply: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion should be massaged in a circular motion on the body until fully absorbed. It is recommended that Bio-Oil® Body Lotion be applied twice daily, morning and evening. Bio-Oil® Body Lotion should not be applied to an open wound or broken skin. It is intended for topical cosmetic application and should not come into contact with eyes. If product gets into eyes, rinse thoroughly with water. Keep out of reach of children. Contains Vitamin A. Consider your skin care before use. Shake before use: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion is an emulsion in which the water and oil are very lightly bound together. So lightly, that when standing some of the oil rises to the surface of the product forming a thin layer. By gently shaking the product before use, the oil layer disperses back into the lotion. The product should be shaken before use. The product should be shaken anywhere from three days to three weeks and is dependent on factors such as temperature, how vigorously and how frequently the product has been shaken. The mere act of using the product daily, turning the bottle upside down when dispensing, is not enough to ensure the oil layer does not form. If an oil layer has formed and the product is dispensed without shaking, a clear oil layer will form on the surface of the product. This is not a consumer safety risk. How long to use: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion's clinical trial has been performed over a 28-day period, allowing the performance of the product to be assessed over time. Statistical analysis shows a significant improvement in the appearance of the skin after as little as 24 days and this improvement is maintained for the duration of the trial. Bio-Oil® Body Lotion may however be used on an ongoing basis to maintain the skin's moisturising properties, making it a part of a daily skincare routine. Use in conjunction with a skincare routine: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion may be used in conjunction with a daily skincare routine. Bio-Oil® Body Lotion should be applied to cleansed skin. If applying a sun protection lotion or other cream only do so after Bio-Oil® Body Lotion has been completely absorbed into the skin. For a over body use, apply Bio-Oil® Body Lotion after showering or bathing. Pregnancy: Bio-Oil® Body Lotion is safe to use during pregnancy. Vitamin A and pregnancy: Women are usually recommended to limit vitamin A nutritional supplements during pregnancy and therefore may have concerns around using skincare products with vitamin A. Any substance applied to the skin is only absorbed if it is present at levels above its toxicological threshold. Because the skin provides a significant barrier to penetration, only a tiny amount of vitamin A enters the body. The European Commission's Scientific Committee on Consumer Safety (SCCS) has evaluated vitamin A in cosmetics which used 42 cosmetic ingredients. The SCCS opinion is that the use of vitamin A in body lotions, up to the maximum concentration of 0.05%, which equates only to 0.0005%, is safe. The level of vitamin A present in the Bio-Oil® Body Lotion formulation is at a level well below this maximum allowable concentration for a body moisturiser.

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DINING

THE HUNDRED CLUB

Three restaurants hitting a milestone.

By Ajesh Patalay

**THE RUSSIAN TEA ROOM, NEW YORK**

Founded in 1926 by members of the Russian Imperial Ballet, this landmark venue in New York's Midtown still possesses a faded charm with its art deco-style interiors and eastern European dishes such as beef stroganoff, kulebyaka (salmon pie) and signature borscht.

Among the highlights on the newly refreshed cocktail list is the Ballet Russe – on the menu since the 1940s – made with yuzu vodka, lychee, dry vermouth and hibiscus-honey elixir.

**CHEZ GEORGES, PARIS**

Not to be confused with the bistro by the same common name on rue des Canettes, which opened in 1952 and is also worth a visit, this art nouveau brasserie on Boulevard Pereire boasts an interior full of leather banquettes and metallic finishes – and an old-world menu bearing classics such as escargots, gigot d'agneau, crème caramel and profiteroles.

**VEERASWAMY, LONDON**

Despite fears of eviction, the UK's first fine-dining Indian restaurant will occupy its original premises on Regent Street for the foreseeable if its lease is extended.

Opened by Edward Palmer, great-grandson of an English general and an Indian princess, the 110-seat room serves dishes from across the subcontinent. Mulligatawny soup and Hyderabad biryani are among the most enduring.

This year, one of Milan's dining institutions turns 100. Bice (pronounced bee-chay) is a family-run restaurant known for serving traditional Tuscan dishes such as ribollita and tripe, and signature Milanese courses including veal ossobuco with risotto and cotoletta. The restaurant is particularly beloved by the fashion set, despite (or perhaps because of) its old-fashioned approach exemplified by a decor of oil paintings and tartan rugs. "It feels like an Italian *nonna's* dining room," says French publicist Ben Cercio approvingly.

The restaurant first became a fashion canteen in the 1970s thanks to its location between the city's two most important shopping streets, Via Monte Napoleone and Via della Spiga, and proximity to the fashion houses. When Gianni Versace was still a tailor he would dine there. During Milan Fashion Week the restaurant came into its own, filled with stylists, fashion PRs, models and celebrities. "When I moved to Milan in

"IT FEELS LIKE AN ITALIAN NONNA'S DINING ROOM"

2001, you never had to call a restaurant to reserve a table," says US-born editor-turned-designer JJ Martin. "At Bice during fashion week, you had to book at least a month in advance." Even today "it can take 10 minutes just to say hello to every table before sitting down", says Cercio.

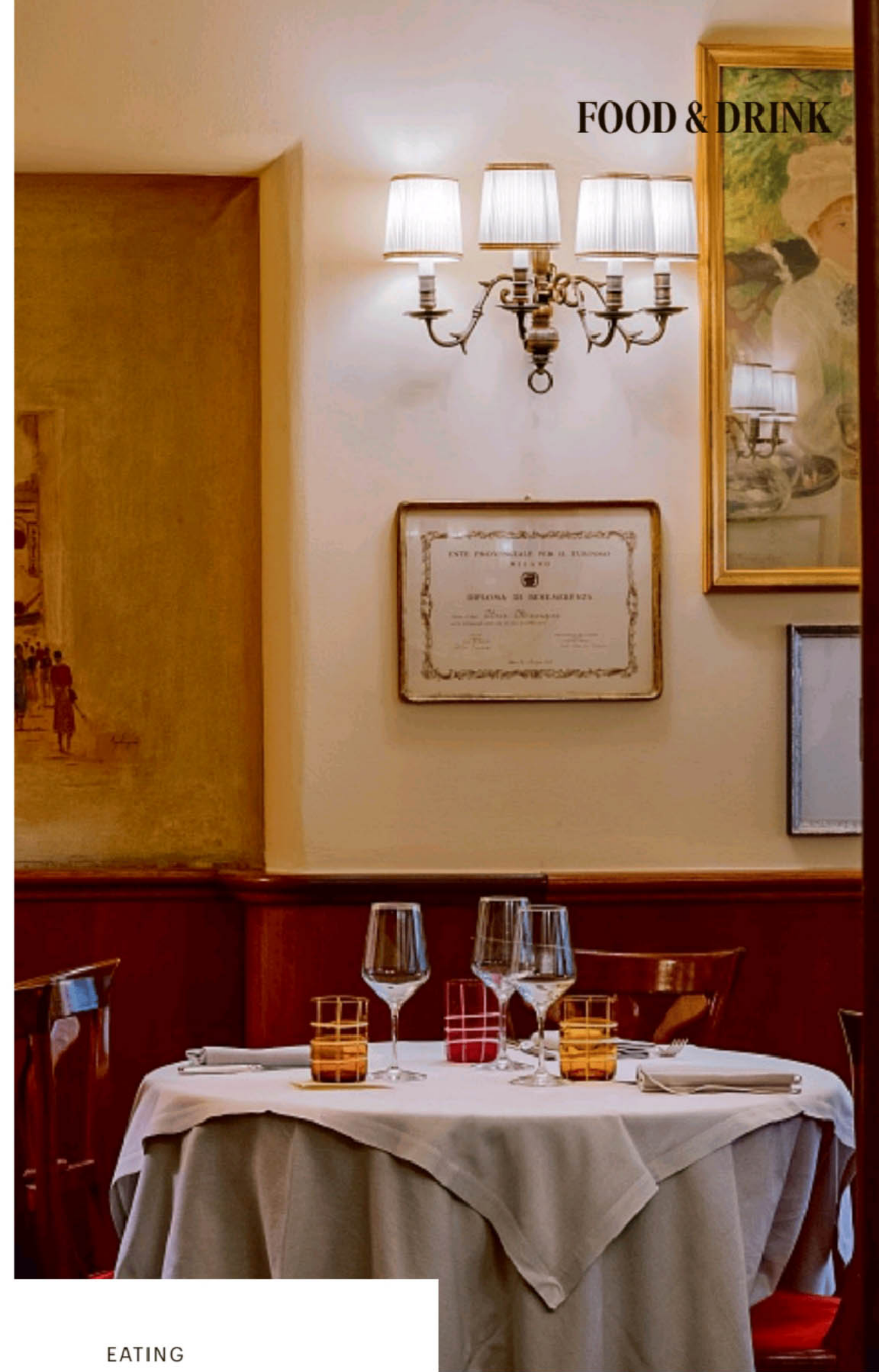
What doesn't change is the service. "Bice's pressed tablecloths and ritualised service exemplify a certain Milanese formality," says Martin. "At the same time it feels very warm. Like the best places in Italy, they make you feel like family." British publicist Daniel Marks agrees: "I love a Diet Coke. Even if I haven't been for months, they will greet me by name and offer me one. Their memory for faces is amazing."

The unpretentious food is a major draw too. "The spaghetti alle vongole and linguine ai gamberi are absolute musts," says Cercio. Even more popular is the pappardelle al telefono made with tomato, cream and mozzarella. Invented by the first owner's son, it takes its name from the mozzarella strings that resemble the cord of an old telephone. "Even if I get a carb coma, it's so reassuring," says *10 Magazine* editor Sophia Neophitou-Apostolou. As for dessert: "The tiramisu is incredible," says Cercio. "But you haven't lived until you try the apple pie with ice cream," counters Marks.

Its founder Beatrice Mungai was born in 1901 in Tuscany to a peasant family, the first of 10 children. "Bice" soon developed a reputation for her wholesome cooking and tenacity. Having married Gino Ruggeri and moved to Milan as a newlywed, she opened the restaurant in 1926. "She spent afternoons in the kitchen checking every dish and would get angry if it wasn't done the way she wanted," reports



Top right: Bice on Via Borgospesso in Milan. Left: Beatrice "Bice" Ruggeri (sitting at the head of the table) with some of her sisters, c1975-80



EATING

VENI, VIDI, BICE

Ajesh Patalay celebrates 100 years of the Milanese institution serving home comforts to the fashion crowd

her granddaughter, also named Beatrice Ruggeri. When Gino fell ill, "she took him to Tuscany and she worked in the restaurant", her granddaughter adds. "Every Monday she drove to Tuscany to visit. She was the first woman in her village to own a car." In 1939, following her husband's death, she

moved the restaurant to its current spot on Via Borgospesso.

Having survived the war, the restaurant flourished in the '50s and '60s. In 1978, Bice's sons Remo and Roberto opened a second Bice in Sardinia. Nine years later, a third restaurant was unveiled in New York, paving the way for locations across the US, including in Palm Beach, Orlando and Atlanta. Although several branches have since closed, including the original New York Bice, the group at its peak included Bice Mare (specialising in seafood) in Dubai, the "casual-chic" Bice Cucina in New York and outlets in Shanghai and Doha.

The original restaurant is now owned and run by Remo's daughters Roberta and Beatrice, and remains largely unchanged. "We try to keep everything the same," says Beatrice. Their grandmother continued working at the restaurant until she was 90. "For her, it was life," says Beatrice. "She always opened in the morning and said to me, 'I'd like to die here in my restaurant.'" She died in 1996.

With the opening of Langosteria Montenapoleone in Palazzo Fendi and Sant Ambroeus on Corso Giacomo Matteotti, there is no shortage of fashionable restaurants in the area. Yet Bice continues to thrive. "The fashion industry is made up of people who have been doing their jobs for a long time and they love to go," says Marks. "When you take a younger generation, it's a sort of validation and rite of passage."

For its 100th birthday, the restaurant will introduce a special menu featuring all Nonna Bice's original recipes. It's sure to be a hit. "Fashion editors travel so much, we like the familiar," says Neophitou-Apostolou. "After so many memories and so much laughter, Bice feels like home." ■HTSI

@ajesh34

How to show it



Think pearls belong on strings?
Think again, says *Aylin Bayhan*

The inspiration Yar Aguer shot by Felix Cooper for HTS in 2024. **1** AKYN wool Dree coat, £820. **2** JIMMY CHOO satin and pearl Sacora 100 sandals, £1,575. **3** JENNIFER BEHR pearl Donna barrette, \$329, covey.com. **4** CHANEL metal and pearl necklace, £9,570. **5** RALPH LAUREN COLLECTION pearl layered necklace, POA. **6** ADAM LIPPES silk organza, faux pearl and mother-of-pearl embellished Brie dress, £6,370, net-a-porter.com. **7** PRADA steel and pearl earrings, £620. **8** GIVENCHY brass and resin Spiky Pearl necklace, POA. **9** CAROLINA HERRERA wool-mix faux pearl embellished skirt, £1,620, net-a-porter.com. **10** SIMONE ROCHA wood, pearl and crystal clogs, £575. **11** Marilyn Monroe *The Last Sitting Pearls* 1 print by Bert Stern, 2011, £2,748, pamono.co.uk. **12** MACH & MACH satin and pearl Floating Pearl slingbacks, \$975. **13** COMPLETEDWORKS gold-plated metal and faux pearl hair comb, £295, net-a-porter.com. **14** LOUIS VUITTON metal and pearl sunglasses, £3,665, stockx.com. **15** LA PRAIRIE White Caviar Pearl Infusion face serum, £630 for 30ml. **16** MAGDA BUTRYM faux pearl embellished bikini top, £405, and matching briefs, £370, net-a-porter.com. **17** RACHEL GILBERT tulle embellished Francesca minidress, £2,052, modaoperandi.com. **18** YVEL pre-owned gold, diamond and pearl ring, £5,423, farfetch.com.



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